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THE TIMES

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Invading Tutsis capture key city

War in Zaire brings fear of bloodbath

By MICHAEL BINYON AND SAM KILEY IN UVRU

GOMA, a strategic city in eastern Zaire, yesterday fell to the invading Rwandan army in fierce street-by-street fighting alongside Zaire's Tutsi insurgents. Its capture is expected to trigger a new pogrom against the Tutsis in the turbulent, sprawling country.

The signal has already been given in Kinshasa, the capital. Zaire's parliament voted on Thursday to expel all ethnic Tutsis from Zaire's army, civil service and state-owned companies. A huge mob yesterday surged through the centre of Kinshasa, looting and attacking Tutsi-owned property and calling for all-out war against Rwanda.

Kengo wa Dondo, the embattled Zairean Prime Minister, has defiantly rejected calls for regional peace talks, and accused Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda of sending troops to wage war on his country and join forces with the country's Banyamulenge Tutsis, who have risen in revolt against their oppressors.

Western diplomats were last night predicting the possible break-up of Zaire along with fresh massacres and a new torrent of refugees. They said the Kinshasa Government had all but lost control of its mineral-rich eastern provinces, which are threatened by ethnic bloodshed.

Tens of thousands of refugees have been streaming out of the main cities as Zaire's ragged army retreated in disarray before determined assaults by the well-trained Rwandan army. Zaire last night claimed to have recaptured the eastern towns of Bukavu and Uvira in Kivu province.

Anastase Gasana, Rwanda's Foreign Minister, denied that his Government was fighting in Zaire. But journal-

ists watched as Rwandan soldiers advanced on Goma, 75 miles to the north of Bukavu, by land and across the lake. Last night the triumphant army appeared to be in control of the centre of Goma.

Evacuation attempts were being made by neighbouring countries and the United Nations to halt the bloodshed, but all proposals for a swift peace conference have been rejected by both sides. Mr Gasana said Rwanda had no need of an international peace-keeping force. The European Union has appealed to the Organ-

isation for African Unity to intervene, but it has watched helplessly, expressing only its "grave concern" and calling for an end to hostilities.

President Mobutu of Zaire, recovering from a cancer operation in Switzerland, has said nothing about his country's disintegration. Staff at his luxurious villa in Lausanne said he was smiling and relaxing and appeared to be in good health after an operation in August for prostate cancer.

Zaire, a country the size of Western Europe, has a population of 40 million, comprising more than 400 tribes and 200 languages. Since its independence from Belgium, in 1960, the mineral-rich country

has been plagued by corruption, mismanagement and ethnic conflict.

The latest ethnic tension was sparked by the Kinshasa Government's call for the expulsion of all Tutsis, who were disenfranchised in 1981. The Tutsi, cattle-herders originally from the Rift Valley, are spread throughout Central Africa, and now control the army and government in both Rwanda and Burundi, although they are a minority in each country. They have also been settled in eastern Zaire for the past 200 years.

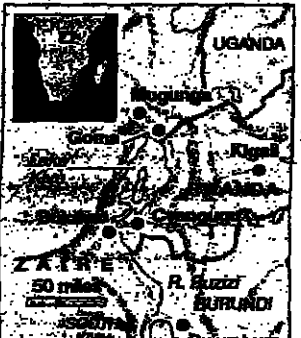
The United Nations has lost contact with an estimated 500,000 refugees, both Hutu and Tutsi, who fled the latest fighting in eastern Zaire. Western aid agencies were preparing for a mass evacuation of their staff.

Corinne Dulka, a Reuters journalist trapped in Bukavu, said civilians were beginning to trickle back yesterday after the rout of the Zairean troops. She said that the town had fallen to lines of well-equipped rebels in uniform and carrying mortar bombs on their heads through the streets.

"We were visiting the Hotel Residence in the north of the city to see the South Kivu province's Military Governor, General Elisse Yombentele, when pandemonium erupted with soldiers running back and forth," she said.

"Hundreds of militiamen and troops suddenly started streaming down past the hotel from the southern entrances of the city. The general went up to his room at the hotel to get his gun and with a band of bodyguards rushed out. During the afternoon tens of thousands fled Bukavu."

Central Africa battle, page 15
Leading article, page 23



Paul Gascoigne arriving for a training session at Ibrox yesterday. His decision to take counselling has kept him in the England squad

Outrage over Gascoigne selection

By JOHN GOODBODY AND EMMA WILKINS

PAUL GASCOIGNE was included in England's World Cup squad yesterday, provoking outrage among women's rights groups and religious organisations which said he should be dropped over allegations that he had sexually abused a young woman.

Campaigners accused the England coach, Glenn Hoddle, of putting football before the safety of women, and setting a bad example to young people. But Mr Hoddle said that to drop the Glasgow Rangers star from the party travelling to Georgia next week would have been the easy option; Gascoigne had recognised his problems, was taking counselling and had to be helped.

Mr Hoddle, a committed Christian, named not only Gascoigne, but also Tony Adams and Paul Merson, who are both being treated for drink-related problems, as



Sheryl Gascoigne: dislocated fingers

well as Ian Wright and Paul Ince, who also have a bad disciplinary record.

But the greatest forgiveness involved Gascoigne, whose wife Sheryl was photographed two weeks ago with face injuries and dislocated fingers apparently suffered in a row with the player. Mr Hoddle, who has attended a counselling session with the Rangers

player, pleaded with critics to allow him to be given a chance, saying: "One of the prime examples that Jesus spoke about was forgiveness, in the long term, not just the short term."

Mr Hoddle said that he had selected Gascoigne on merit, although he did not condone what he had done. "I have high standards," he said, but he added: "I accept that people are human. The facts are that if Joe Public had done exactly the same thing and there had been no police involvement, that man wouldn't have got the sack and his capacity to earn would not have been taken away from him."

The Football Association fully backed Mr Hoddle's judgment. In a joint statement, Keith Wiseman, the FA chairman, and Graham Kelly, the chief executive, said: "The FA has considered the interests of the game as a whole. We don't condone unacceptable behaviour. We condemn

it. We have some knowledge of personal matters that relate to the situation and we are convinced that Glenn Hoddle's decision is the right one."

But women's groups, religious leaders and opinion polls all insisted that Mr Hoddle had made the wrong choice. Sandra Horley, chief executive of Refuge, said the selection sent out all the wrong signals. "Allowing Gascoigne to represent England can only give the impression that it is all right to beat your wife."

And Julie Bindel, spokeswoman for an international conference on violence and abuse of

women, said: "Hoddle has clearly shown that football and winning a match is more important than the safety of women." It was an outrage that Gascoigne, who admitted two years ago that he had sexually abused a young woman, should be made "a national hero in this way and that he will be even more of a role model for many boys and young men."

Mr Kieran Conroy, a spokesman for the Catholic church, was also concerned about Gascoigne's influence. Continued on page 3, col 4

Rob Hughes, page 52

US firm holds talks on merger with BT

By GEORGE SIVELL

MCI Communications Corporation, America's second largest long distance telephone company, announced last night that it was in talks with British Telecom on a possible combination of the companies.

BT already holds 20 per cent of MCI which last year invested £2 billion (£1.24 billion) in

The News Corporation, owner of The Times.

If the two companies merge, the deal will be colossal. BT shares were worth 351p at the close of trading last night, down 4 1/2p, giving the company an estimated value of £22.6 billion. MCI, whose shares soared almost 60 per cent to more than £30 before the announcement, is worth more than £21 billion on the stock market. Trading in MCI shares was halted after the rise, sparked by a report on an American television station.

MCI said it expected this weekend, although it noted that there were no guarantees a deal would be reached.

It is a time of immense change in the telecommunications industry. BT merger talks with Cable & Wireless, the second largest British telephone group, failed this year. Last month Cable & Wireless, through its Mercury subsidiary, merged with three cable television and telephone firms.

Telecom giant, page 27

Jailed nurse kept secret her psychiatric history

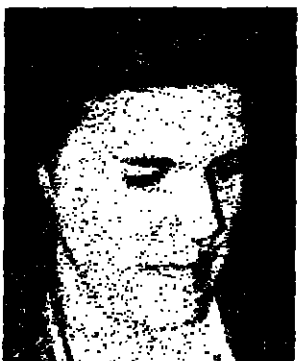
By ADRIAN LEE

A NURSE who sabotaged an intensive care unit's equipment hid a history of serious psychiatric problems from her employers it emerged yesterday as she was jailed for five years.

Amanda Jenkinson, 37, was found guilty of causing grievous bodily harm to a patient at Bassetlaw Hospital in Worksop, Nottinghamshire. But police said that she could have been responsible for more than 30 incidents in at least three different hospitals - and patients may have died.

The Times can reveal that Jenkinson was the main suspect in an inquiry into hospital sabotage 12 years ago. She was investigated by police in 1984 while working at Nottingham City Hospital but insufficient evidence was found to charge her.

The incidents, spanning two years, also involved machines being switched off or altered and equipment was damaged. She went on to work at eight other hospitals, none of which knew of her background. At



Jenkinson: sabotaged intensive care unit

Nottingham Crown Court yesterday, a judge called her wicked.

Chief Superintendent Peter Coles, who led the two-year investigation, said: "My own view is that she is a very dangerous lady who transferred her venom towards her colleagues to her patients."

Asked about other possible incidents, he said: "You are talking about seconds in time, many years ago. It has been a very difficult case. He said the medical authorities faced a

dilemma concerning how much of a nurse's medical history should be passed on to her employers.

Munro Donald, Bassetlaw's chief executive, praised his staff for uncovering Jenkinson. "It was they who allowed us to stop this evil woman in her tracks."

The nurse, who had excellent references, was thoroughly vetted but concealed her psychiatric history. The hospital had no way of checking her background.

North Nottinghamshire Health Authority, which buys services from Bassetlaw, an NHS Trust, said yesterday that it would hold an independent inquiry to see if any lessons could be learnt.

Jenkinson shook her head as Mr Justice Owen told her: "All nurses will be horrified at what you did." He added: "You did what you did for your own selfish purposes and you caused great harm to a woman who unhappily was going to die, but nevertheless you caused her that harm."

Concealed history, page 5

Gun lobby to sue Howard

Michael Howard was threatened with legal action in the British and European courts unless the Government improved compensation to shooting enthusiasts over the outlawing of most handguns.

The gun lobby reacted furiously to the Home Secretary's announcement that there would be no compensation for ammunition, accessories or the loss of trade. Page 10

Tough anti-strike laws proposed

Anti-strike laws proposed in a leaked Green Paper include fresh strike ballots after every three months of industrial action and a new threshold for ballots. Strikes could proceed only if they were backed by the majority of the workforce, whether they had voted or not. Page 2

Bomb suspects

About 40 suspects are under arrest for the terrorist bombing of an American barracks in Saudi Arabia. Officials there are convinced that the attack was backed by the Iranian Government. Page 13

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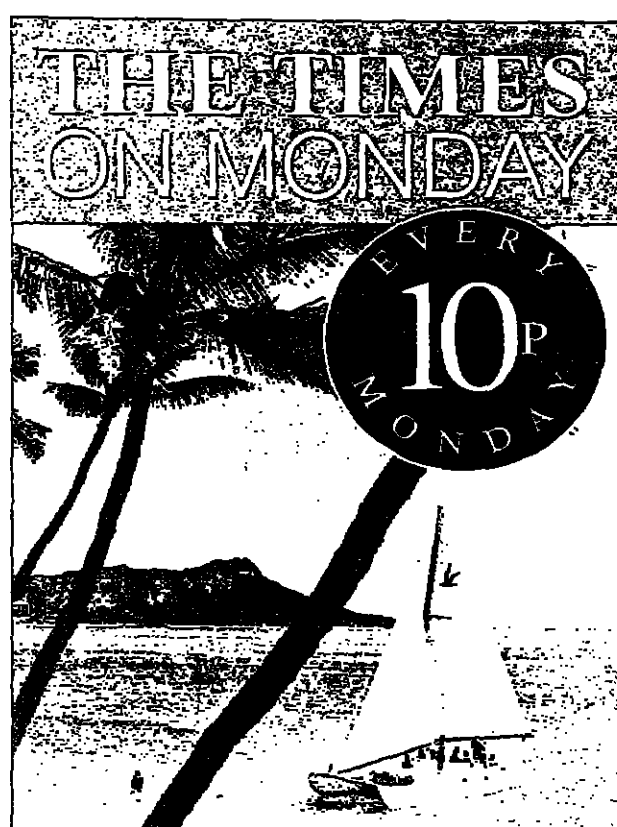
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THE POETRY OF WAR

Kenneth Baker selects the finest poems about men and war

EVERY MONDAY: MATTHEW PARRIS
COLUMNIST OF THE YEAR

Unions and employers reject Green Paper as an overreaction

Lang threatens tougher strike ballots

By Philip Bassett
INDUSTRIAL EDITOR

ANTI-STRIKE laws proposed in a leaked Green Paper go much further than had been expected, it emerged yesterday. They include a requirement for fresh strike ballots after every three months of industrial action and a new threshold for strike ballots.

Strikes could proceed only if they were backed by the majority of the workforce, irrespective of whether they had taken part in the ballot. Ian Lang, the President of the Board of Trade, has also proposed extending the notice period for strike action after a lawful ballot from seven days to 14 days.

The plans were leaked to the Trade Union Congress, whose general secretary, John Monks, called them a "cynical pre-election attempt to play

the trade union card". Britain's good strike record did not justify such action, he said.

Stephen Byers, Labour's employment spokesman, described the draft Green Paper as a "triumph of political dogma over good industrial relations". The Government should be trying to prevent the cause of strikes by promoting partnership at work, he said.

Employers' organisations also accused the Government of overreacting. Geoff Armstrong, director-general of the Institute of Personnel and Development, said that the Government was taking a sledgehammer to crack a nut. "If this is true, the Green Paper goes much further than anyone had expected and way beyond strikes in essential public services," he said.

Ministers were angry last night that the proposals had been leaked

before their official publication later this month.

Mr Lang refused to be drawn last night, although a statement from the Department of Trade and Industry said that he was already on record as saying that the Government would shortly bring forward new measures to deal with public service strikes.

Ministers acknowledge privately that, unless the spate of strikes seen in the summer picks up again, legislation on the new proposals is unlikely before the election. Instead, the proposals are likely to form a centrepiece of the Conservatives' election manifesto, but could quickly move into law if the Tories win.

The paper says that, while the Government has brought about a "revolution" in industrial relations, recent strikes had shown that there was little statutory protection against disruption of essential services. "The

Government believes there is now widespread recognition that the right to call strikes should be constrained within reasonable limits." Unions and their members must take account during a dispute of the wider interests of the community.

Arguing that recent strikes had shown clearly that "some trade unions cannot be relied on to exercise self-restraint", it puts forward a range of measures to limit strikes:

□ Essential services: instead of trying to carry out the legally complex task of defining what constitutes an essential service, the Green Paper says that the Government will remove the immunity enjoyed by trade unions from civil action if a strike is judged to have "disproportionate or excessive effects". These would include risks to life, health or safety; threats to national security; serious damage to property or the economy;

and "significant disruption of everyday life" in part or all of the country.

□ Strike notice: the current law requiring a union to give seven days' notice of strike action, after a lawful ballot, should be doubled to allow those adversely affected by strikes a longer period to prepare themselves.

□ Ballot threshold: strike action will be legal only when a majority of those entitled to vote are in favour, rather than a majority of those voting. This would prevent unions from calling industrial action when there had been a low turnout in the ballot.

□ Reballoting: strikes would be subject to a fresh ballot at most three months after its start, and at three-monthly intervals afterwards.

Other moves include ending the right of employees to take time off for union activities, and the abolition of a right to information for collective bargaining with employers.

Head girl wins battle to save her school

A HEAD GIRL yesterday won a reprieve to stop her school from closing at Christmas. Fiona Thake, 17, forced a climbdown after she served a writ on the owner of the 88-year-old York College for Girls, which two weeks ago was doomed to closure.

Fiona wrote to the Church Schools Company after it made its decision to close the school and she and her friends kept up a concerted campaign, including the issuing of writs, to halt the plans. Now the school will be kept open until the summer so that pupils can sit their GCSE and A levels.

The news came as a great relief to Fiona, who threatened to take her case to the European Council for Human Rights, because she feared her dreams of becoming a doctor would be dashed if she had to switch schools months before her A levels.

She said yesterday: "Obviously I am delighted that we got what we wanted, and that was to stop the school closing at Christmas, which could have ruined my future. But I'm sad such a good school will close in the summer."



Fiona Thake and friends after hearing yesterday that York College for Girls will stay open until the summer

Major longs for the quiet life in a library

By Andrew Pierce
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

JOHN MAJOR, who has never been noted for his interest in books, revealed yesterday his secret ambition to follow in his mother's footsteps and become a librarian when he leaves Downing Street.

While Baroness Thatcher has carved out a role as an international stateswoman since her fall from power, Mr Major has a much more modest ambition. The Prime Minister, whose favourite literary characters include Billy Bunter and Robin Hood, wants to be surrounded by books when he gives up — or is forced to leave — Number 10.

Mr Major, responding to a question yesterday from children at Priory Junior School, Gedling, Nottinghamshire, about what job he would like, said: "I would like to read books. I would like a job that would surround me with the things I love — maybe working in a library."

The Prime Minister would have made his late mother, Gwen Major-Ball, proud. She worked in a library when he was a child in south London. He used to smuggle up in his bed every night in Brixton with a copy of one of his first library books, *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* by Jules Verne. Mr Major, whose favourite writers are Anthony Trollope, Robert Goddard and Jeffrey Archer, chose the 19th century novelist's *The Small House at Allington* when he appeared on *Desert Island Discs* in January 1992. Mr Major campaigned successfully for a niche for Trollope in the overcrowded confines of Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey.

But before the Prime Minister could realise his ambition he would have to go back to school. Librarians have university degrees. Mr Major has only a handful of O levels. He would also have to take a huge pay cut in his Prime Ministerial salary which will go up to £143,000 after the general election, or £98,000 if he is Leader of the Opposition.

Trainees in public libraries earn little more than £10,000 and the salary for a fully qualified male librarian is £25,500. One librarian in Nottingham, told that Mr Major wanted to become the library service's most illustrious recruit since Philip Larkin, said: "Oh no. That is the last thing we want. We are trying to change our image as dull little dormitories. I don't think he should be encouraged."

Mr Major was not so forthcoming to the youngsters when they asked him about his favourite food.

While most people know he cannot resist frozen peas he declined to be drawn for fear of an intensive media comment. "It will be all over the newspapers as the commentators start subjecting it to all kinds of analysis. I will have to tell you in private."

But he defended his favourite restaurant, the Happy Eater. "Famous people are just like ordinary people," he said. He used them when he was hungry just as anyone would.

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Blair outstrips Kinnock in party leader role

By Peter Riddell

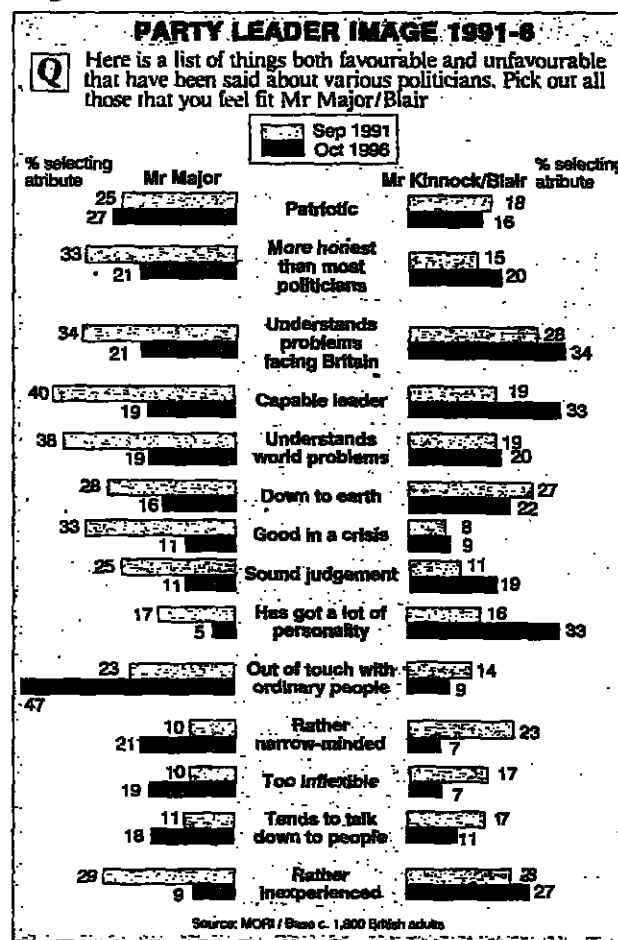
TONY BLAIR currently has a more favourable image as a party leader when compared to John Major than Neil Kinnock had five years ago, according to the latest MORI poll for *The Times*.

The poll, undertaken last weekend, shows that both Mr Blair and Mr Major have improved their images in the eyes of the public compared with last February, when the same questions were posed. More see Mr Blair as having a lot of personality, understanding world problems and facing Britain, being patriotic and having sound judgment. More people also regard Mr Major as patriotic, down to earth and a capable leader.

Overall, Mr Blair is ahead of Mr Major as being good in a crisis and being patriotic, while all three party leaders, also including Paddy Ashdown, are virtually at level pegging in being seen as more honest than most politicians. Otherwise, Mr Blair is ahead on being seen as a capable leader, having sound judgment, understanding Britain's problems and having a lot of personality. He comes top, however, on being seen as rather inexperienced.

As revealing is a comparison of where Mr Blair and Mr Major stand now against where Mr Kinnock, then the Labour leader, and Mr Major stood in September 1991.

On all but two of the 14 measures of leader image, Mr Major's standing has deteriorated compared with five years ago. The exceptions are being patriotic and inexperienced. His image has become much worse since 1991 on being a capable leader, being



out of touch with ordinary people and understanding world problems.

By contrast, Mr Blair's image is more favourable than Mr Kinnock's five years ago. On 11 out of the 14 measures, in some cases, the changes are not large, but Mr Blair is clearly better placed on having a lot of personality, being a capable leader and having sound judgment. The only three points where Mr Blair is

less favourably placed than Mr Kinnock are patriotism, being seen as down-to-earth and inexperienced.

Former Tories take a much less favourable view than Tory loyalists of Mr Major's qualities as a capable leader, his understanding of the problems facing Britain and being out of touch with people.

MORI interviewed 1,747 people at 161 sampling points between October 25 and 28.

Tory hierarchy campaigns to save Scott

By Alice Thomson
AND ANDREW PIERCE

THE Conservative Party hierarchy has launched a behind-the-scenes campaign to try to save the political career of Sir Nicholas Scott, the former minister facing a deselection battle on Monday.

Right-wing members of the Kensington and Chelsea Conservative Association are

trying to replace Sir Nicholas with a younger more Euro-sceptic candidate at the general election. The move was launched after the MP was found slumped in the street late at night last month yards from John Major's hotel at the party conference in Bournemouth.

But those seeking his deselection also want to thwart the parliamentary ambitions of Chris Patten, the Governor

of Hong Kong, who hopes to resume a Commons career after next June's handover to China. They view him as a paternalistic one-nation Tory.

The high command wants Sir Nicholas to hang on, then create a by-election in a possible safe seat for Mr Patten.

And the Prime Minister is keen to see his former party chairman back in the Commons.

'I don't condone what Paul has done but I want to help him change', says England coach

Hoddle's faith in forgiveness stems from deep belief

BY RUTH GLEDHILL, RELIGION CORRESPONDENT

GLENN Hoddle's plea for Paul Gascoigne to be forgiven over allegations that he beat up his wife is testament to the England coach's strong religious belief.

His faith stems from an England tour to the Middle East in 1980, when he was 28 and still playing. The team visited Bethlehem, where Mr Hoddle had an "exhilarating"

spiritual experience that put him on the path to God.

By then he was already seeing a faith healer for soccer injuries, and claims a healer once cured him of a hamstring injury. Although Mr Hoddle, who believes in reincarnation, avoids any description of himself as an evangelical or born-again Christian, his faith is Christ-centred. He is an occa-

sional rather than a regular churchgoer, although Sunday football commitments would make regular churchgoing difficult.

Mr Hoddle, who first made his faith public ten years ago, insists: "I wouldn't say I was a born-again Christian. I wouldn't say I was anything. I've got a strong faith in God and a belief in God."

In a recent interview on BBC's *The Big Question*, a Sunday morning religious programme, England's youngest-ever coach continued: "I do believe we're here for spiritual reasons and I think that the spirit lives on after death." He confessed: "Jesus is probably the biggest example that we've had on earth to try and live our life or how God wants us to live our life - so it's a very individual belief I've got, a very individual connection with God."

He said: "One of the prime things Jesus spoke about was forgiveness. I don't condone what Paul has done but I want to help him change. People can change - Saul was one. I want to give him that opportunity to learn from his mistakes. If you want to call it a last chance - I'm not calling it a last chance - but the ball's in his court."

Mr Hoddle also named Tony Adams and Paul Merson, who are both being treated for drink-related problems, as well as Ian Wright and Paul Ince, who also have a bad disciplinary record.

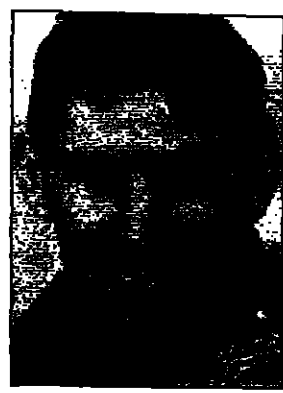
He responded to the stream of calls demanding Gascoigne should have been left out of the squad as a public example to others. He said: "The word example is important here. I want to give Paul the chance to make an example of him long-term. What a great example if he can change, like Paul Merson has changed. You can have a quick example, punish him and cast him out now. But I am hoping that Paul can change. I have seen a change in him in the last two weeks and I hope that can continue."

"If we can make him a role model after some of the mistakes he has made, that would be fantastic example to children, to youngsters and others in the same position. If I honestly didn't think that was possible, I wouldn't have brought him in. But to cast him out now would be detrimental to the long-term things his family are looking for, that as a footballer he's looking for."

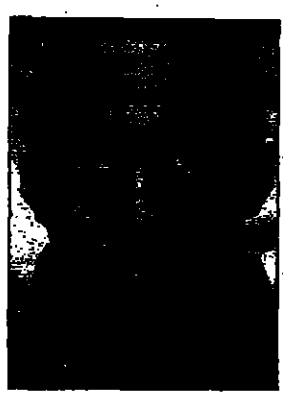
"Gascoigne has to be forgiven by his family and by everyone else involved. In an ideal world, Paul Gascoigne will become a role model off the back of the mistakes he has made. That would be fantastic. I believe that with my help and that of counselling we can guide and help both him and his family."

Gascoigne's last chance, p52

ROGUES' GALLERY



Tony Adams, Arsenal: hard-tackling, uncompromising defender. In December 1990 was sentenced to four months' jail for a drink-driving offence. Forgiven by Arsenal, for whom he has been an inspiring skipper, he also captained England during the Euro 96 championship last June. His domestic troubles were disclosed two months ago when it emerged that his wife, Jane, is a drug addict and Adams himself admitted that the stress caused him to become an alcoholic. The pair are now getting a divorce.



Paul Ince, Internazionale: abrasive, midfield player, often in trouble with referees. When playing for Manchester United he ran towards the crowd after Eric Cantona kicked a spectator at Crystal Palace in January last year. Ince was subsequently cleared of assaulting a spectator. Last March he was sent off when playing for Internazionale in the Italian League but refused to leave the field for three minutes. Ince, who is black, is frequently subject to racial abuse by Italian fans and players.



Paul Merson, Arsenal: in November 1994 he admitted to gambling debts, heavy drinking and taking cocaine. He said later of his problem: "I hit rock bottom. I was near suicide. There were times when I was at the wheel and I used to think about pulling over in front of a lorry." Forced to rehabilitate himself, he fought back, first into the Arsenal team and then into the England squad. However, last month it was disclosed that his marriage had suffered because he no longer felt able to go out and socialise.



Ian Wright, Arsenal: his volatile temper has brought him into conflict with the authorities. In February 1995, he paid a woman £750 in an out-of-court settlement after spitting in her face. The following month he was involved in a fracas with Steve Bruce, of Manchester United, at half-time. Accused by Roger Nilsson, of Sheffield United, of spitting in his face during a game this January. Caused great offence when he called David Platt, the Sheffield Wednesday manager, a "pervert".



Tina Dixon with her long-lost brothers Kevin Brown and Mark Innes

Woman finds her long-lost brothers on the golf course

BY KATHRYN KNIGHT

A WOMAN playing in a golf tournament lost the game but found a new family when she discovered her opponent was the brother for whom she had been searching for years.

The amazing coincidence led to Tina Dixon, 39, being reunited with her two brothers from whom she was separated as a four-year-old when they were given up for adoption in 1961. Mrs Dixon, née Innes, had given up hope of ever finding her brothers Kevin and Mark.

Her only clue had been that they were adopted by a family called Brown on the east coast of England but she had phoned every family of that

name in the area with no success and eventually gave up her decades-long search.

Then Mrs Dixon, a hairdresser, and her husband John, were paired up with John Innes, from Killingworth, and his partner Ron Wingfield, in the annual competition draw at the Slaley Hall golf course in Northumberland.

Yesterday, Mrs Dixon from Stocksfield, Northumberland, said that as the couples began their game, she mentioned to Mr Wingfield that she was having trouble with her shoulder. He suggested she should see Mark's brother who was a physiotherapist. "When I asked what his brother was called he told me

it was Kevin Brown. My heart leapt into my mouth. I asked why they had different names and he told me they'd been adopted and Mark had taken back his original name."

Eventually, at the thirteenth hole, she plucked up the courage to break the news to her brother. "I just couldn't believe it," Mr Innes, who is married with two children, said. "I was shocked rigid. It's not every day someone comes up to you on a golf course and tells you they are your long lost sister."

The family was completed when Mr Innes contacted his brother by phone from the clubhouse and Mr Brown raced down from his home in North Shields, Newcastle.



Hoddle announcing his squad yesterday: a changed Paul Gascoigne would be a good example, he said

Outrage over Gascoigne selection

Continued from page 1

on the young. He said: "Paul Gascoigne's selection sends out a message saying that bad behaviour doesn't really matter. It says that we are still prepared to put them in places where they have a high profile as a role model. You can't ask young people to emulate just one aspect of a role model, they are bound to see the whole person."

Mr Conroy also questioned Mr Hoddle's notion of forgiveness, saying: "Forgiveness must be based on a willingness of the

offending party to put things right. You can't just dish out forgiveness as if it is so much surplus butter."

Rabbi Julia Neuberger also felt that Gascoigne's inclusion in the squad suggested that domestic violence was not taken seriously.

But Mr Hoddle insisted that Gascoigne had to be given the chance to become a good role model. "I want to give Paul the chance to become an example long-term. What a great example if he can change,

like Paul Merson had changed. You can have a quick example, punish him and cast him out now. But I am hoping that Paul can change. If we can make him a role model after some of the mistakes he has made, that would be a fantastic example to children, to youngsters and others in the same position."

Gascoigne himself spent yesterday morning training at Ibrox Park and said nothing. His wife, who is living in Hertfordshire, was also silent.

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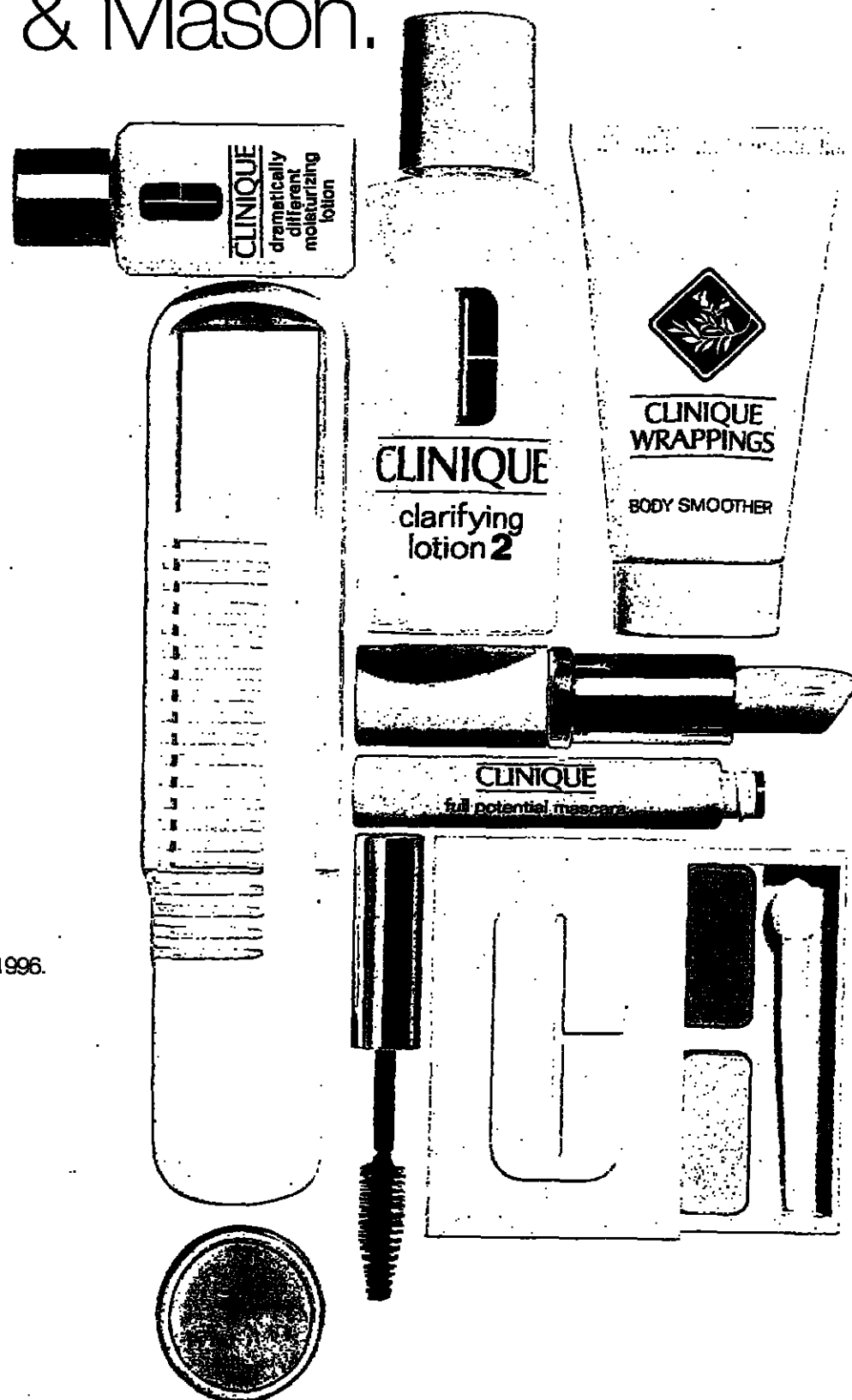
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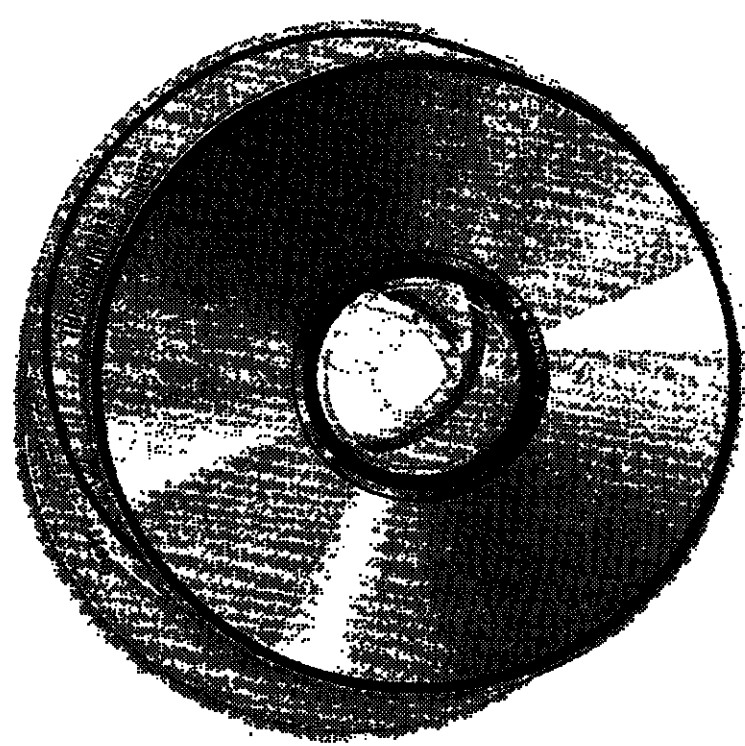
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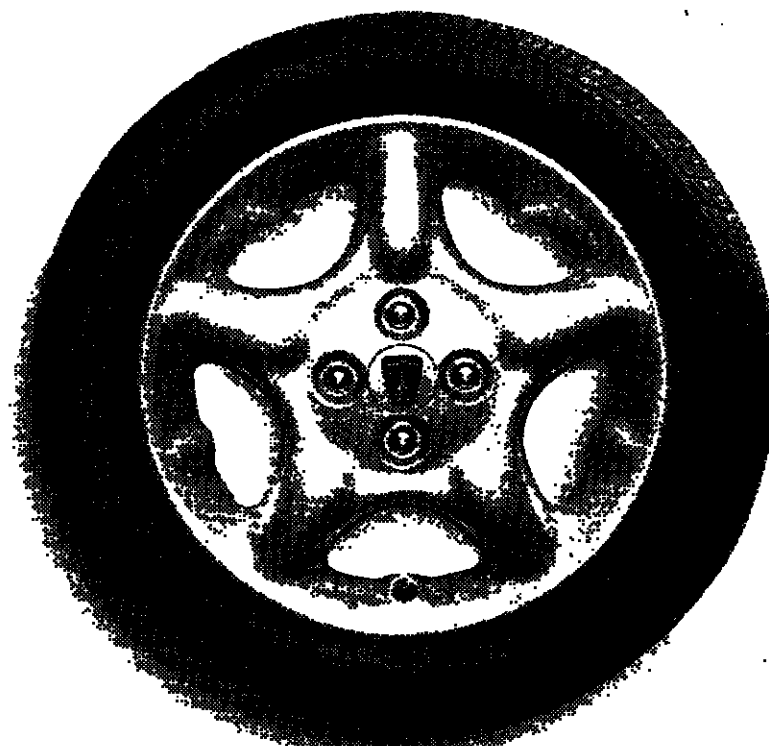
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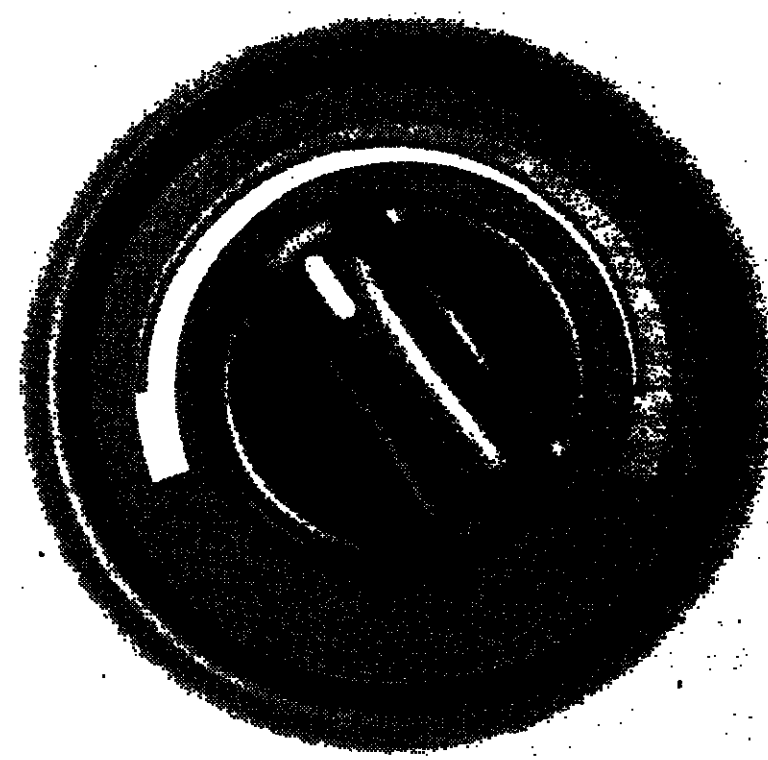
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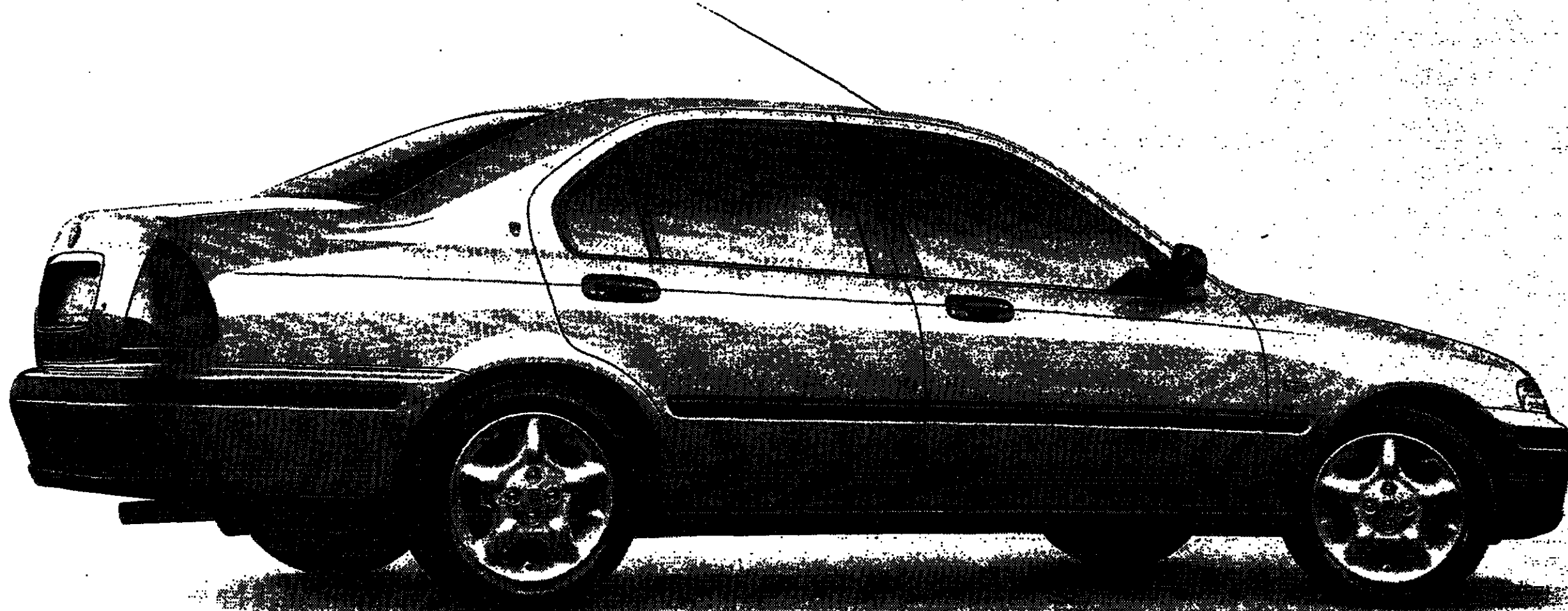
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Broader role for travel agencies

Labour plans to 'privatise' tourist information centres

FROM HARVEY ELLIOTT IN ISTANBUL

PLANS to "privatise" Britain's network of 800 tourist information centres by handing them over to travel agencies are being drawn up by Labour. Jack Cunningham, Shadow Heritage Secretary, and Nigel Griffiths, Labour's consumer affairs spokesman, held detailed talks about the proposals with the Association of British Travel Agents during its annual convention in Istanbul yesterday.

Dr Cunningham earlier told delegates that Labour was determined to give them a bigger role in selling Britain as an international tourism destination. An outline of his plans, which will involve setting up joint ventures between local authorities and travel agencies in key tourist areas, will be unveiled within the next ten days.

Dr Cunningham is finalising a tourism policy document based on changes to the Development of Tourism Act of 1969, which gives powers to local authorities to run information centres from local finances. Abta has been pressing the Government to give agencies a greater role in

tourism within Britain, but has so far been ignored.

Labour has picked up the plans, which it sees as a way to save cash and tap into the expertise and latest electronic equipment of travel agencies. Dr Cunningham said there were "huge opportunities" to market Britain in the run-up to the millennium but they were being ignored. "Britain is slipping down the world tourism league," he said. "If Britain had been able to retain its share of world tourism, there would have been at least 200,000 new jobs created."

Instead, he said, travel agencies continued to use their experience and skill to send Britons abroad rather than enable them to take holidays at home and that had created a deficit in the balance of payments. The British Tourism Authority (BTA) said last night that it would support any move to give travel agencies a share in the running of tourist information centres. "As long as what they do is good for British holidays, then we are all in favour," a BTA spokeswoman said.

"It is a real business oppor-

tunity," Ian Reynolds, Abta's chief executive, said. "We've been to see the Department of National Heritage to press for greater involvement in selling British holidays, especially through short breaks. But there is no point in a travel agency offering domestic holidays if just along the street is an information centre or tourist shop funded by the local council which is doing the same thing."

He said hotels sometimes refused to deal with travel agencies because their offers were available freely through local tourist centres. The 562 tourist information centres in England are run mainly with local authority money but some have the help of private investment or central government. Some are almost self-sufficient through the sale of local produce and souvenirs. It is this disparate grouping that is encouraging Labour to introduce a unified scheme.

The tourism industry is worth £37 billion a year to Britain. In the past 12 months foreign visitors reached a record 24 million, spending a total of £12 billion.

Dr Cunningham told the convention that he was determined to try to win the next World Cup and the Olympics for Britain as part of the drive to increase tourism. But he said Labour would sign up for the Social Chapter, which many in the industry regard as a potential problem, and he expected Brussels to insist on Britain following the EU's Working Time Directive.

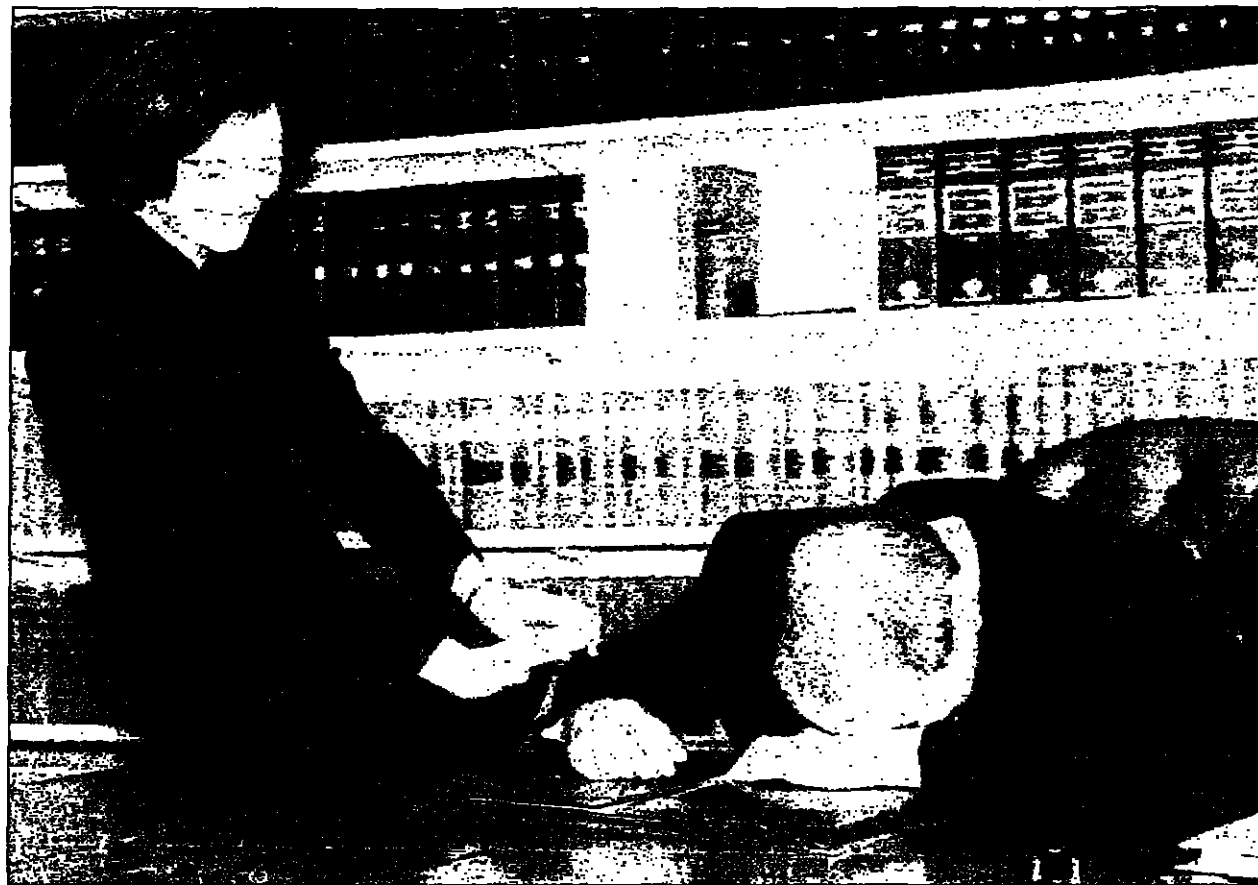
He insisted, however, that the directive would provide workers only with the right to refuse to work beyond 48 hours but not force them to stop work if they wished to continue. He refused to be drawn on the minimum wage.

"We will ensure that the voice of the industry is heard at the Cabinet table, something that has not happened in the recent past," he said.

Travel, Weekend pages 17-24



Cherie Booth and Brian Moore, promoting Graduate Law Week, see the funny side of a career as a lawyer



A life in law proves a laughing matter

CHERIE Booth and Brian Moore dissolved into giggles yesterday as they posed at a photocall to publicise the launch of Graduate Law Week (Kathryn Knight writes). Ms Booth, a barrister, and Mr Moore, a solicitor and former England rugby player, had met for the first time and were being photographed in Ms Booth's London chambers.

The two broke into laughter as they

jested about who should sit behind Ms Booth's desk and who should sit on it to achieve the best effect. In the end, with Mr Moore concurring that Ms Booth's legs were better than his, Ms Booth perched above her desk for photographers. Later, in the interests of balance, the two swapped positions.

The two lawyers discussed the problems of juggling their professional and domestic lives. They are to hold another

photocall at the launch of the Graduate Law Fair next Wednesday.

Their comments about the punishing schedules of a law career coincide with a survey conducted by *The Lawyer* magazine, in which 90 per cent of law students said they expected a stressful career and anticipated long hours. However, they also expected a rewarding career and thought the profession was highly respected by the public.

NEWS BRIEF

Haulage boss jailed for death of worker

The former boss of a haulage firm was jailed for a year yesterday over the death of a worker in a chemical spillage. Alan Jackson and Jackson Transport had been convicted at Bradford Crown Court of manslaughter. James Hodgson died after being sprayed in the face with a chemical while cleaning a lorry without protective clothing. First aid was not available. Judge Gerald Coles said yesterday that he had to mark the fact that Jackson and the firm was found guilty of gross negligence.

Teacher's abuse

John Fernes, 67, a retired school teacher, was ordered to pay £10,000 compensation to a pupil he sexually assaulted 35 years ago. His victim, now aged 47 and living in Scotland, had been affected ever since. Lewes Crown Court was told.

Christie wins case

Lindford Christie, the Olympic sprinter, yesterday accepted substantial undisclosed libel damages and legal costs over a front page story in *The Sun* which claimed he had failed to pay maintenance for his children.

Father killed son

A father who killed his six-week-old son because he was crying was jailed for life yesterday. Darrin Gleaves, 21, of Easington Colliery, Co Durham, was convicted at Teesside Crown Court of murdering his son Lee.

Publican jailed

Patrick Southgate, manager of a pub in Poplar, east London, was jailed for two and a half years for stealing up to £800 raised for Dunblane massacre victims and their families, and £1,400 bar takings. He fled to Spain after taking the cash.

Gretna record

The registration office at Gretna Green will today pass the highest number of marriages in a year when it registers its 3,587th wedding. With its busiest weeks still to come the office expects to record 3,800 marriages by the year's end.

Cheltenham stung by Archers arrow

CIVIC leaders in Cheltenham are furious after a character in *The Archers* described the town as dreary (Emma Wilkins writes).

Julia Pargetter, who considers herself to be a member of the aristocracy despite her humble origins, made the derogatory remark in an episode this week. When asked if she was going to visit Cheltenham, Mrs Pargetter said: "I've got better things to do than trudge around a dreary market town."

The slur brought an indignant response from Keith Gore, president of Cheltenham's Chamber of Commerce. "The scriptwriter has

clearly never been to Cheltenham. I think it's very unfair."

Vicky Goodwright, of the Cheltenham Tourist Information Board, said the cast and producers should visit the town before making criticisms. "Cheltenham has come a long way in the last 300 years, from a small market town to a fashionable spa resort and a thriving town."

A spokesman for the Radio 4 serial pointed out what every attentive listener to the series already knows: criticism from Julia should generally be regarded as a good thing. "Julia is a terrible snob. The people of Cheltenham should be delighted."

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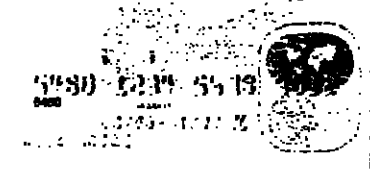
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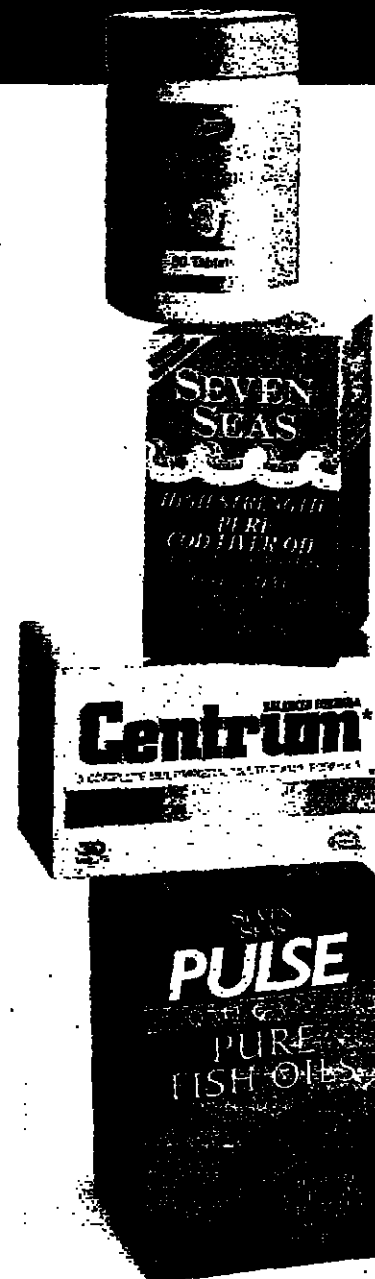
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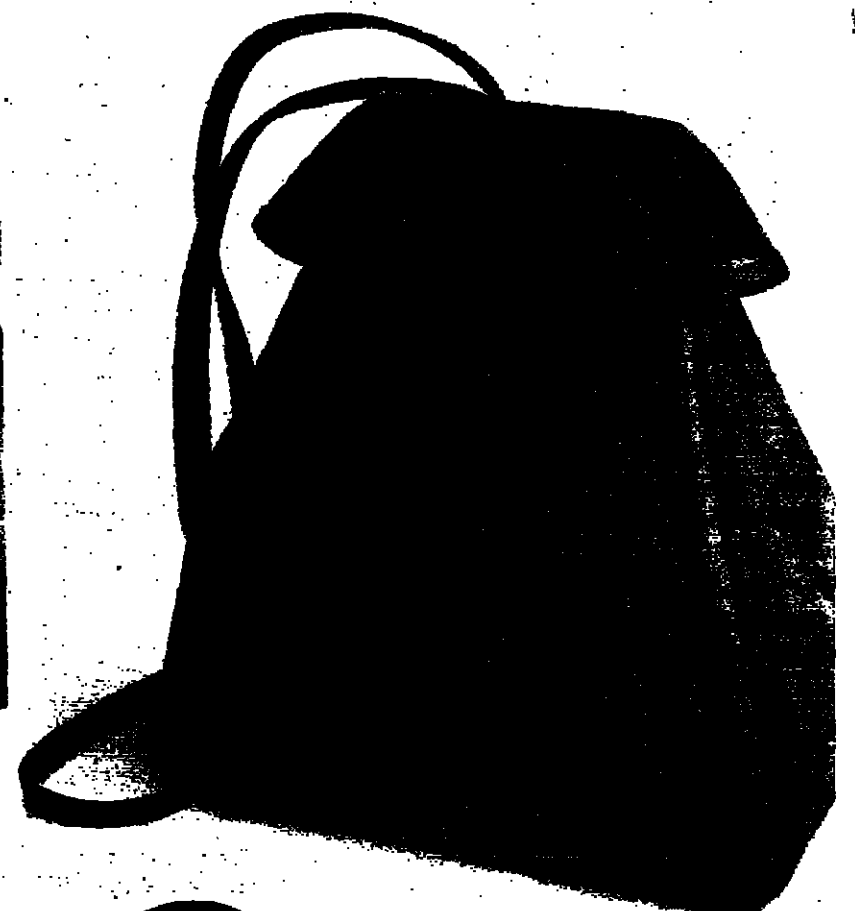
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Ridings pupils call for troublemakers to be kicked out

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Cardinal Hume welcomes former Church of England clergy but insists celibacy is the norm for priests



Cardinal Hume at the ordination of ten former Anglicans at Westminster cathedral yesterday. He said the exceptional dispensation to ordain married men was God's will

Four married ex-Anglicans are ordained

By RUTH GLEDHILL, RELIGION CORRESPONDENT

CARDINAL Basil Hume, the Archbishop of Westminster, yesterday ordained four married men to the priesthood, but insisted that celibacy remained the norm for the Roman Catholic priesthood.

He ordained the four men — all former Anglican clergy — alongside six other former Anglicans at Westminster cathedral. His move was criticised by the Advent group, a support organisation for priests, monks and nuns who had to leave the active ministry because they had wished to marry. A spokesman welcomed the new priests, but said: "If married ex-Anglican clergy can be dispensed from celibacy, why cannot married Catholic priests be active as priests? Celibacy as a condition for priesthood is a man-made rule. It was imposed in 1139. It can be revoked."

The ordinations also attracted a peaceful protest outside the cathedral by campaigners for women priests in the Catholic church. The ceremony coincided with the 50th anniversary of the ordination of Pope John Paul II, who had personally sanctioned the or-

dination of the married men. He has also permitted all the former Anglicans to enjoy a fast track to Catholic ordination, avoiding the many years in a seminary which young Catholic men undergo.

The four married men were Father Robin Burgess, 47, a chaplain at the Central Middlesex Hospital; Father Stephen Coker, 43, attached to the parish of St Lawrence's, Feltham; Father Timothy Edgar, 40, a lecturer with the Mill Hill Missionaries' Institute; and Father Stuart Hasker, 35, assistant priest of Our Lady of Graces, Chiswick. They were the first married priests to be ordained in the Westminster diocese, the largest in Britain after Liverpool.

Cardinal Hume said: "Celibacy remains normative. But we see the exceptional dispensation to ordain married men to the priesthood as God's will for them and for our diocese at this time." He added: "What we are doing, though new and exceptional, has the blessing of God."

At Your Service
Weekend, page 14

Only a change of heart will help us inch our way to holiness

"THE sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit. A broken and contrite heart. O God, thou shalt not despise."

Fifty years ago, at school in Edinburgh, my class started to read Chaucer. One of the early lines in the Prologue runs: "In Southwark at the Tabard as I lay." I haven't given Southwark much thought in the meantime, but much of the Prologue has stayed in my mind — about that band of pilgrims setting out from there to Canterbury 600 years ago and telling their tales. Oh, the Friar, the Pardoner and others show little evidence of broken and contrite hearts; yet in many of the pilgrims there are points of

character, now haughty, now humble, where we probably recognise ourselves. Only the poor Parson and his brother the Ploughman escape the author's satire.

The battle goes on, in all of us, between pride and humility: and the lines can be blurred at times, the vice seeming almost to be the virtue. The devil knows what he is about. Screwtape and his henchmen dislike unemployment. Remember that line in Genesis: "now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field." When we protest we're of no account, or that we're misery itself and nothing but refuse, how would we like to be taken at

CREDO

Fr William Anderson, Canon of St Mary's Roman Catholic Cathedral, Aberdeen, is the winner of *The Times*/College of Preachers Preacher of the Year award. This is an edited version of his winning sermon. The final was held this week at Southwark Cathedral

our word and have that said of us by others?

A waggish friend, an Anglican, remarked to me recently: "Yes, I do so admire humility — in other people!" And so perhaps do you and I. After all, to have our hearts bruised or crushed could involve a degree of discomfort — even

pain — which we'd rather do without. A troubled spirit, a humble, contrite heart: how elusive it is for the honest seeker, how hard to discern. Hilaire Belloc's epigram, *The False Heart*, fairly hits the mark:

I said to Heart: 'How goes it?' Heart replied: 'Right as a

Ribstone Pippin! But it lied.

I remember an eminent cardiologist opening a talk with these words from Jeremiah: "The heart is deceitful above all things; who can know it?" This is surely as true of the spiritual as of the physical side. The author of Psalm 51 — possibly King David repenting of his adultery with Bathsheba — has a series of telling insights into the affairs of the heart. And he comes before God with a number of stark imperatives: have mercy, blot out, wash me, purge me and so on. There's urgency as well as realism about his highly personal prayer, self-abasement included. Yes, just occasional-

ly it's proper almost to grovel as he does when we pray; to come before the Almighty, slime of the earth that each of us is, and admit: "Lord, my name is mud!"

Indeed our sin is ever before us; so is our waywardness, our dallying with temptation. The battering ram of God's insistent love alone will crush our underlying pride. For all that, humility shouldn't make permanent doormats of us, mud or no mud. It shouldn't oblige us to think less of ourselves than of others, or have a low opinion of our gifts. Perfect humility would mean freedom from thinking about ourselves at all. Disinterest in self would lead us to focus our thinking and our acting on the needs of other people, for humility is charity's first cousin.

St Francis de Sales, for all his *douceur*, teases us about our self-importance even at surface level: "Some people are proud," he declares, "because they ride a fine horse, or have a feather in their hat, or are very well dressed. This is obvious folly, for if there is any glory here it belongs to the horse or the bird or the tailor!"

Psalm 51 is an exercise in self-examination, transparently candid. The desire to be cleansed is intense, for the consciousness of sin oppresses its author. "Wash me thoroughly," he begs, "create in me a clean heart." And the whole poem, in its prayerful power, challenges us in our struggle to be open, to be lowly in God's sight. And it sets before us, with a rising degree of optimism, ideals that would be within our grasp, if only we'd put ourselves meekly in God's hands, if only we'd trust his loving kindness. Neither burnt offering nor any other external show of service will suffice. Only a troubled spirit, only a change of heart will do.

Mind you, we can spend so much time in trying to eliminate the great "I am" that we may become vainly anxious, even scrupulous about it. So I like to remember the 17th-century Scottish peer Lord Erskine, who complained to his publisher about the tardy production of his autobiography. He was told that the printers had sadly run out of capitals of the letter "I".

Scholarship, tradition, received piety, all have their

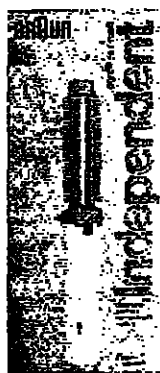


William Anderson

place. But for you, for me, in our quest for forgiveness, only your heart, only mine, can individually respond. And, in so far as they do respond, we shall gradually inch our way forward to holiness.

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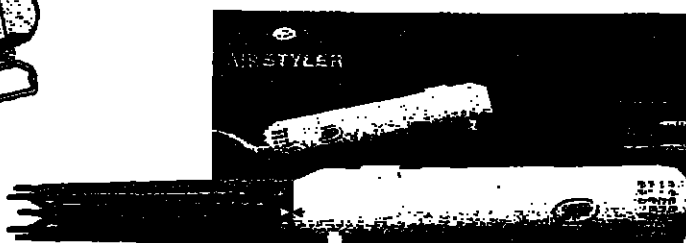


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Youths jailed for killing son in front of father

TWO youths were jailed yesterday for kicking a teenager to death in the front garden of his family's home after he tried to stop them tormenting his father.

Anthony Erskine, 19, was felled by punches and kicks from Mark Hemmens, 20, and Damian Collins, 16, who continued to kick him after he lost consciousness. His father, 53, told Birmingham Crown Court that he found himself frozen to the spot, unable to believe what he was watching.

The Erskine family, from Stratford-upon-Avon, had

long been taunted by Hemmens, who had bullied Anthony and his twin brother, Ian, in the past. On January 3 Mr Erskine was confronted and abused by Hemmens and a group of youths.

Hemmens and Collins, both from Stratford, had already drunk about 15 bottles of beer between them and had been riding around the streets on a moped. Mr Erskine ignored the abuse and continued home, where he told his son what had happened. Anthony told him: "I'll go and talk to them and sort it out." He was

pushed by Hemmens and fell back into the garden. A scuffle broke out and Collins, who was wearing heavy leather boots, joined in the fight. Anthony was knocked to the ground, where he was kicked and punched by Hemmens.

Mr Erskine told the court: "The other one [Collins] ran up and kicked Anthony in the head. He was using his head like a football. They crouched down and started punching."

"That's what is getting to me - I didn't do anything. I just froze." Anthony tried to cover his head with his arms and

pulled his knees up to his chest to protect himself, but drowned in his blood.

The killers then went to Shipston-on-Stour, where they hoped to be hidden by friends. But they were forced to return to Stratford on foot and police found them later in the loft of a house. Both admitted that they had been involved in the violence, but denied an intention to kill.

The jury found them guilty of murder by a majority verdict of ten to two. Hemmens was sentenced to life imprisonment and Collins to be detained at Her Majesty's pleasure.

Mr Justice Keene said: "It was a vicious and cowardly attack. You may not have intended to kill him, but you certainly intended to do him serious physical injury. It was two of you against one and the worst of the violence was inflicted while he was lying helplessly on the ground."

Hemmens held his head in his hands and fought back tears as the murder verdicts were delivered. Collins mouthed "No way" and shouted "Don't worry" to his grandmother before being led away.



Anthony Erskine's sister, Natalie, and mother, Dorothy: "We cannot look to the future with any confidence"

Nightmare is not over, says mother

THE family of Anthony Erskine were still being threatened and feared reprisals after his killers were convicted and sentenced, his mother said yesterday.

"This is not the end but another chapter in a terrible nightmare. We cannot look forward to the future with any confidence. There have been threats since my son died. The harassment has not stopped," Dorothy Erskine, 47, said.

"My son Ian was told after the trial: 'You will be dead; your face will look like your brother's'. The area we live in is a nice area, the people are nice people. There are only three, four or five

families that spoil it." Mrs Erskine told a press conference. Surrounded by her family, she said she wanted the family of Damian Collins evicted from the Clifton estate.

"They are only three doors away from us. I don't think I could face seeing them come out of their door every day," she said. "My children were constantly being beaten up, not just a push or shove but really being beaten up. Help was not there."

She said members of the Collins family, including the parents - both at present serving jail terms - had either

physically or verbally attacked them. Ian, Anthony's twin, said he had been threatened by friends of the two defendants since his brother's death and he still felt at risk on the estate.

Natalie, his sister, said: "They keep saying he will end up in a coffin like his brother. We have had years of harassment and bullying from the defendants and their friends."

Their father, Harry, 53, sat silently throughout the press conference and refused to answer questions, too upset to talk about his son's death and his family's future.

Historian sues publisher over Holocaust claims

By DALYA ALBERGE, ARTS CORRESPONDENT

PENGUIN Books and four employees of bookshop chain Waterstone's are being sued for libel by the historian David Irving for publishing and promoting a book called *Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory*.

Mr Irving is also taking legal action against the author, Deborah Lipstadt, who lives in the United States.

He maintains that the book associates him with "extremist fascist leaders and practices". Mr Irving believes that he emerges from its pages as "an Adolf Hitler apologist who... shows documents and photographs... data in order to... historically unimpeachable... specifically the... Hitler."

He added yesterday: "Another serious allegation is that I destroyed documents which I obtained from the Moscow archives."

The historian and author is no stranger to controversy. Almost 20 years ago he wrote *Hitler's War*, in which he suggested that the extermination of the Jews was carried out without Hitler's knowledge until October 1943. He has disputed that as many as

six million Jews died in the Holocaust.

The solicitor Anthony Julius, who will be representing Ms Lipstadt, said: "We will defend this all the way."

Mr Irving is involved in two other major libel cases. He is taking legal action against the Board of Deputies of British Jews, also represented by Mr Julius, and against the historian Anita Sherrin. She attacked his biography of Joseph Goebbels for its suggestion that it was the propaganda minister, not Hitler, who devised the Final Solution.

He explained his reasons for suing the four employees of Waterstone's over the Lipstadt book: "When I published my book on Goebbels, I visited 900 shops in England. These four gentlemen were particularly offensive, saying, 'We have given instructions that our store will never stock your book'. That's why they have found themselves singled out in this way. These particular gentlemen took the decision to sell her [Sherrin's] book."

A Penguin spokeswoman said: "This is nonsense. We are obviously going to defend ourselves very, very strongly. We have offered to indemnify the four booksellers."

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Measures that would mean destruction of 160,000 legal weapons could be in force by Christmas

Howard proposes the toughest gun laws in the world

BY RICHARD FORD, HOME CORRESPONDENT

MICHAEL HOWARD unveiled proposals yesterday for some of the toughest gun controls in the world in response to public and parliamentary outrage over the Dunblane massacre. His measures ran into a barrage of criticism from the gun lobby.

The Home Secretary said he hoped that, with the co-operation of all parties in Parliament, the Firearms (Amendment) Bill would be law by Christmas.

Launching the 40-clause Bill at the Home Office, he said: "The tragic events at Dunblane highlight the need for radical reform of our firearms legislation. This Bill would give this country some of the toughest gun control laws in the world."

The main proposals are: All handguns above .22 calibre would be banned, leading to the destruction of 160,000 of the 300,000 legally held handguns in Britain. Illegal possession of a banned gun would carry a maximum jail term of ten years.

Only handguns using .22 or smaller rimfire cartridges would be permitted, to be kept at registered gun clubs. It would be an offence to have a small-calibre pistol outside a licensed club, punishable by a maximum ten-year prison

sentence. A special permit from the police would have to be obtained when a handgun was moved from a club — normally only for competition purposes or repair by a registered dealer.

Those exempted from the ban include: vets who have to put down animals; workers in slaughterhouses; and race officials at athletic meetings. People with trophies of war obtained before 1946 can apply to be exempt and those with antique pistols kept as ornaments and not fired will be able to hold them at home without a certificate.

Banned handguns would be handed in at a designated police station within a short time of the Bill becoming law. Compensation would be paid to handgun owners and gun dealers who had weapons in their possession on October 16, the day the Cullen inquiry into the Dunblane killings was published. Compensation would be based on the market value of the guns on October 15. No compensation would be paid for ammunition or accessories, or to gun clubs or dealers for loss of business.

No small-calibre pistols would be allowed on club premises unless the club was licensed.

The Home Secretary or

Scottish Secretary would grant a licence to a club at a cost of £150, renewable every five years. The chief police officer would have to be satisfied that the club had adequate security. It would be an offence for a club not to keep a register of pistols held on its premises. Those who did not shoot regularly would lose their right to a certificate.

Applicants for a certificate would have to show that they were fit to hold a firearm and supply four photographs and two references. Referees face a comprehensive questionnaire.

Police would be able to revoke a certificate where a good reason for possessing the gun no longer existed. Everyone using a firearm would have to possess a certificate — it was possible in the past to shoot at an approved gun club without one.

Expanding ammunition would be banned except for the purpose of lawfully shooting deer and vermin. Mail-order sales would, in effect, be banned, as selling, hiring or making a gift of a firearm would have to take place in person. Gun owners would be required to tell police if they bought, sold, destroyed, transferred or deactivated any gun.

Leading article, page 23



George Staden: his stock includes 220 handguns which he now cannot sell

Man who sold to Hamilton attacks 'immoral' Bill

BY STEPHEN FARRELL

THE largest Smith and Wesson dealer in the country watched the market value of his 220 handguns fall from £66,000 to zero in a few minutes yesterday.

George Staden's gloom at The London Armoury was matched only by Smith and Wesson's British distributors, who declared that Dunblane had been "the gun trade's equivalent of BSE".

Debate among dealers and wholesalers in the wake of Michael Howard's proposed legislation has already moved on from lost business to demands for compensation. Before Dunblane Mr Staden, a former Thames lighterman, sold 530 handguns a year and had 100 customers a week at his black-fronted shop beneath a railway arch at the north end of the Rotherhithe Tunnel in east London. They included the Dunblane killer Thomas Hamilton, who bought Browning pistol grips and other accessories by mail order a few months before the massacre.

Although rifles and airguns still fill the green baize racks behind steel doors and bullet-proof windows, Mr Staden, 49, sold his last pistols on October 14. Full-bore handguns accounted for 80 per cent of his business.

In addition to his unwanted pistols, he has £50,000 worth of ammunition and accessories. He wants £750,000 compensation for stock, premises, loss of annual earnings until his retirement, and pension entitlements. Yesterday, he learnt that the maximum compensation would be for the handguns alone, less than a tenth of the total he seeks. "It is a criminal destruction of an already totally police-controlled industry," he said. "I think [Michael] Howard is proposing immoral measures to wreck a complete industry with minimal compensation."

The Gun Trade Association

held an emergency meeting in Birmingham on Thursday, attended by 200 retailers and suppliers. Roger Hale, managing director of Parker-Hale, British importers and distributors of Smith and Wesson, estimated that 50 per cent of dealers would go out of business, partly because of the ban and partly because clubs could not afford the security measures required for holding other types of weapons.

"This is effectively a total ban. Clubs won't be able to charge adequate subscriptions, so there won't be any clubs and there won't be any shooting," he said. "It sounds heretical but, as a trade, we would be better off if there was a total ban. Under the current proposals the Government can say it has left us the refuge of 22 handguns so they have an excuse for not compensating us properly."

Mr Hale said that his firm, which has a £3.5 million annual turnover, would lose 15 per cent of its revenue. It has other areas of business, manufacturing small-arms components, rifle barrels and machinegun parts for the Ministry of Defence.

Smaller dealers were not so fortunate, he said, and the market had slumped across Europe. "There has been a 50 per cent fall in sales in Belgium with the introduction of tighter legislation and Germany is going through a very hard time at the moment."

"Dunblane has been the gun trade's equivalent of BSE. The scare which has been thrown into the market as a result of Dunblane has been considerable and universal."

Pro-gun lobbyist sacked as social worker for hitting child, council says

BY STEPHEN FARRELL



Law: firearms and ammunition seized at his home

A PRO-GUN lobbyist whose wife planned to stand for Parliament in Dunblane was dismissed as a social worker after allegations that he hit a child in care. It was disclosed yesterday.

The claim emerged as police entered Richard Law's Pembrokeshire farmhouse, headquarters of the Shooters' Rights Association, and took possession of firearms and ammunition. Lewisham Council, southeast London, confirmed that Mr Law, 44, was investigated in 1985

after claims that he hit a boy at Sydenham Hill children's home. "There was a serious incident after which the council had no hesitation in dismissing Mr Law and making it clear he should not work with people in care again," a Lewisham spokeswoman said.

The allegations were not passed on to police because the alleged victim was unwilling to give evidence, a source said. Dyfed-Powys Police are to consider whether Mr Law should continue to hold firearms licences. He is a firearms dealer who holds a licence for 16 guns.

Mr Law provoked anger last month when he announced plans for his wife, Elizabeth, 41, to contest the Stirling seat which includes Dunblane. The plan was dropped. Dyfed-Powys detectives said they would wait until Mr Law returned from holiday before questioning him. A firearms lobbyist launched an internet appeal for information to discredit organisers of the Snowdrop petition. The activist circulated e-mail bulletins seeking details of those behind the appeal, which attracted 700,000 signatures supporting a ban on handguns.

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City firms let the train take the strain on awayday outings to the city of culture and romance

This year's office Christmas party is in Paris

FROM the end of November until Christmas, more than 100 groups from various City and South East companies are planning to hold their office Christmas parties in Paris (Morning Preston writes).

Going on the "Eurobash", as it is fondly referred to at one company, is this year's exciting alternative, encompassing a lunch-time grande bouffe at a Paris restaurant, followed by light shopping or museum visiting, leaving time to catch the last Eurostar home just after 5pm.

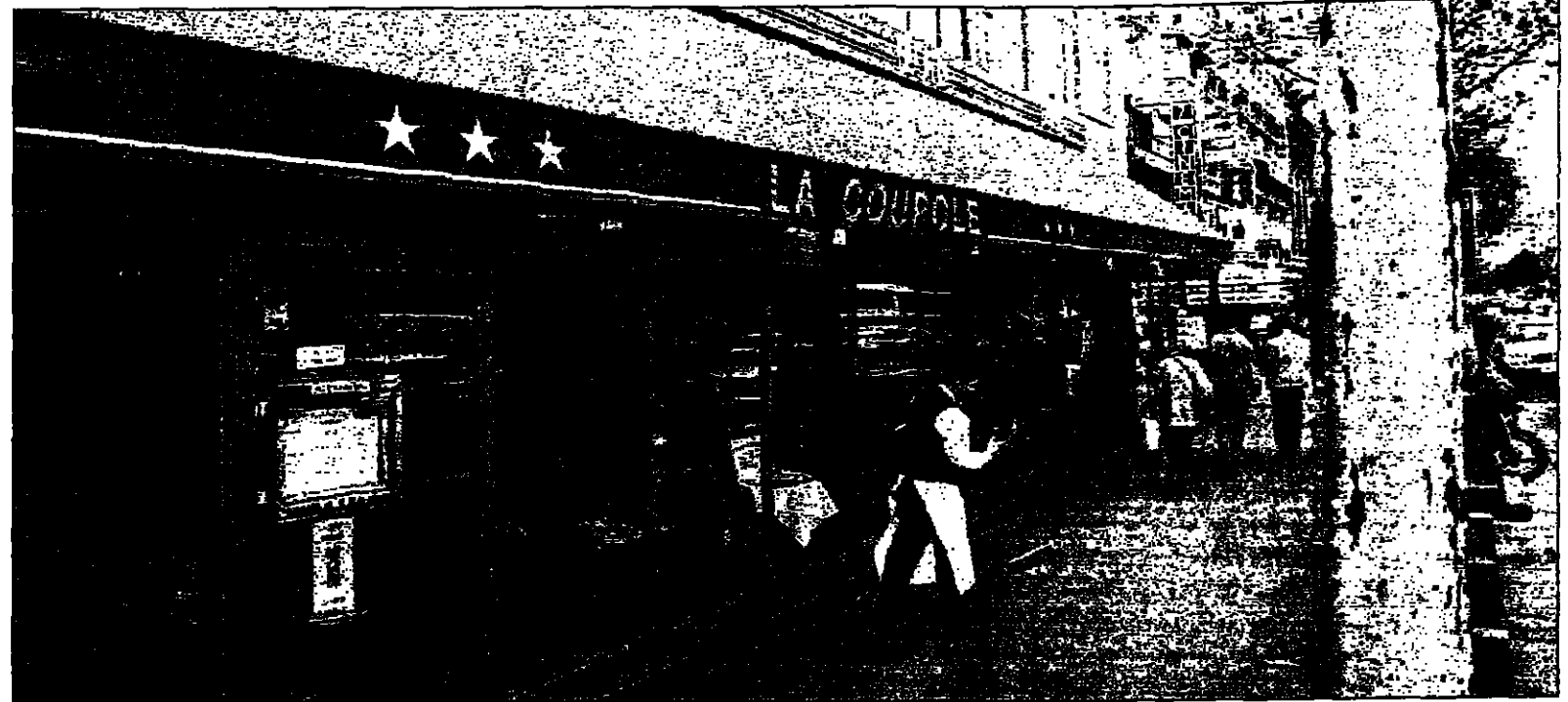
According to Eurostar, groups of between ten and 40 people usually travel together on staff outings to Paris and Brussels and tend to be from the same department. Solicitors, insurance firms, banks and public relations companies are the most common users, especially those based near the Waterloo terminal. Already Warburgs, Virgin and the London branch of Société Générale have sent their staff to Paris or Disneyland.

Will Bailey, a party organiser in the City

whose clients include De Beers and the London Stock Exchange, suggests that firms should try to take their entire staff. "When you invite everybody from the postboy to the company chairman, it's always a good idea to entertain people in the true sense of the word and give them a talking point, anything from a fireworks display to a magic show," he said.

Société Générale's London office organised a trip to Paris on Eurostar only a fortnight ago. It was a perfect opportunity for the bank to entertain clients and market reporters, as well as to show off its order-driven system in France.

One problem that firms may face is the frisson of romance that travelling to Paris might arouse. The Gare du Nord, with its hotels that hire rooms by the hour, was nicknamed the Gare du Nookie by one broker. Employees should be reminded that they must arrive no later than 20 minutes before the last train departs.



Brasseries such as La Coupole accept large parties without flinching — and the food is guaranteed to be free from turkey and stuffing

How to make the most of lunching and shopping

FROM KATE MUIR IN PARIS

TAKING 20 grown-ups to spend eight hours in Paris requires military-style planning, so that tantrums are avoided and not a minute is wasted. Here are some of the best ways to do it.

The centrepiece of the day has to be a long Christmas lunch at a proper French brasserie. The big, old-fashioned brasseries, such as La Coupole and Bofinger, take bookings for large parties without flinching, have stunning decor and the food is

always guaranteed to be excellent — and free from turkey and the trimmings.

La Coupole in Montparnasse is only 20 minutes from the Gare du Nord on Métro line 4, so those taking a morning train (four hours there, two hours back because of the time change) will be perfectly timed for lunch. The Art Deco brasserie opened in 1927 and has been the haunt of Left Bank intellectuals ever since. It is cavernous and boisterous, with a curious

rotating sculpture and pillars painted by Chagall and Brancusi, among others.

Lunch will cost about £25 a head with wine, but this includes choosing from a dozen different kinds of oysters, fresh crab and giant prawns. The waiters sprint past shouting, holding trays of glasses high above their heads.

After lunch, daytrippers can avoid post-party blues by splitting up, each to their own interests. Within walking distance of La Coupole are the

city catacombs, ideal for the young and strong-stomached. Intellectuals can worship at the grave of Simone de Beauvoir and Jean-Paul Sartre in Montparnasse and carousers can continue touring the great cafés of Boulevard Montparnasse, such as the Select, the original Dôme and La Closerie des Lilas, the site of much of Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* and a favourite watering hole of F. Scott Fitzgerald, Lenin and Trotsky.

Other brasseries worth

booking are Au Pied de Cochon at Les Halles, anything owned by the Flo chain, and Brasserie Bofinger, an Art Nouveau gem by the Bastille. It has a stained glass dome, leather banquettes, murals and good choucroute garni.

For those starving as they leave the train, there is Terminus Nord, the fine 1925 brasserie across from the Gare du Nord. Avoid the famed Brasserie Lipp, except for an aperitif — the tiled decor and atmosphere are wonderful,

but the food has gone downhill recently: the menu is uninspiring, the vegetables overcooked and the chicken undercooked.

The brasseries, particularly at Christmas, expect parties to arrive on time. Lateness is punished by loss of table.

For those not suited to the heavier end of French food, there are bargain lunchtime set menus in many of the Michelin-starred restaurants, although such places are less likely to appreciate singing or silly toasts. Les Bookies, on the Left Bank, has a 130F three-course lunch menu, also available in English.

The cultural aspect of the day-trip also requires planning: the Louvre closes on Tuesdays and the Musée d'Orsay closes on Mondays. Queuing for the packed Picasso's Portraits exhibition at the Grand Palais might take up too much of the afternoon. Most of the Paris museums do, however, have late-opening nights: the Musée d'Orsay on Thursdays until 9.45pm, the Louvre until 9.45pm on Mondays, Wednesdays and for special exhibitions. The Pompidou Centre is closed for major refurbishment.

Full-scale Christmas shopping should not be attempted. The obvious targets are the Galeries Lafayette and Printemps department stores on Boulevard Haussmann, which are within ten minutes' walk of possibly the two best foodshops in the world: Fauchon and Hédiard at the Madeleine, each with their own restaurants and cafés. Both shops will create little Christmas hampers and wrapped boxes.

Fresh produce can easily be transported and the staff at the pâtisserie counter will advise on what travels best. At the cheese counter it is possible to ask for a soft reblochon or camembert which will peak in ripeness the day after, allowing for a warm three hours on the train and a night in the fridge.

For the seriously trendy, the clothes shops of the Marais should be investigated. On Mondays, much of the weekend Clignancourt flea market is still open. It is only 15 minutes by Métro from the centre and, aside from clothes, sells portable china, antique

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Musée Rodin, 77 Rue de Varenne
Tue-Sun, winter 9.30-4.45, summer 9.30-5.45
Tel: 00 331 47 05 01 34
Sacré Coeur, 35 Rue Chevalier de la Barre
Basilica, daily 7-11.30pm, crypt, daily 9-6
Tel: 00 331 42 51 17 02
Musée du Louvre, 99, Rue de Rivoli
Wed-Mon 9-6pm, 10pm Mon and Wed, closed Tues.
Tel: 00 331 40 20 50 50 or, recorded info, 40 20 51 51
Notre Dame, Place du Parvis
Cathedral, daily 8-7; tower and crypt, Oct-Mar 10-4, Apr-Sep 10-5.30, Tel: 00 331 42 34 56 10

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Le Cordon, 57 Rue Caulaincourt
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Peking specialties, closed Sun, 00 331 43 59 83 46
Le Drouot, 103 Rue de Richelieu
Spacious Art Deco canteen, open daily, 00 331 42 96 68 23

WHERE TO STAY

Over FF1000 (£120) for single per night...
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glass, paintings and old photographs.
The grandest shopping street used to be the Rue du Faubourg St Honoré, with everything from Versace to Hervé Leger and Yves St Laurent. True sophisticates, however, should head, equipped with gold credit cards, to the Avenue Montaigne. There French grande dames trip smartly in and out of Louis

Vuitton, Nina Ricci, Chanel, Dior, Ungaro and Inès de la Fressange. They take lunch at the café in Joseph or on the Port-au-lion at the Hotel Plaza Athénée.

Thus the Paris office awayday is not about economy. It is about good taste.

Eurostar coupon, page 21
Insider's guide to Paris, Weekend, page 24

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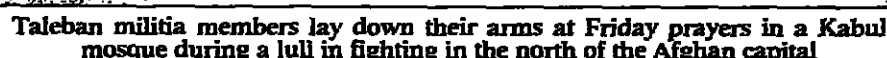
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FROM CHRISTOPHER THOMAS IN KABUL

The four-and-a-half years of conflict since the communist Government fell have been fuelled more by outsiders than Afghans. The end of the Cold

Russia seeks to combat Taliban's Islamic fundamentalism by supporting its rivals. Iran, which promotes Shia

Taliban, its ideas drawn from extremist theologians in Pakistan and Arab countries, is as alien to Afghanistan as was the communist Government. Its rule cannot last.



FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER
IN JERUSALEM

Yesterday's disclosure about new moves to fight right-wing violence coincided with manslaughter charges in a Jerusalem court against Nahum Kurman, security chief of a Jewish settlement, in connection with the death of an 11-year-old Palestinian boy in the occupied West Bank this week. The charges carry a maximum sentence of 20 years.

Madrid: Four people were injured when a car bomb

Hotel escape

Colombo death

Colombo: Sri Lanka's first executive president, Junius Jayewardene, 90, died of cancer. The state funeral will be on Monday, but the venue has yet to be announced.

Obituary, page 25

FROM PETER CAPELLA IN GENEVA

Jean-Pierre Vettovaglia, the 50-year-old married envoy, was ordered back to Switzerland in April after his one-year affair with Floriana Jucan. 21, appeared on the front pages of

In the newly published 282-page book, *The Ambassador*, Miss Jucan denies she was a spy and describes her own impossible love for the envoy.

[illegible]

**Tutsi
race
of Ce**

Ragtag army, ailing President and tribal war push wealthy Zaire into anarchy

Tutsi revolt starts race for control of Central Africa

BY MICHAEL BINYON, DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

THE scramble is on for the heart of Africa. With President Mobutu languishing in Switzerland, a mass uprising of ethnic Tutsi in the east and the Zairean Army reeling in retreat, the race has begun for control of Zaire's fissiparous provinces, its turbulent tribes and huge mineral wealth.

Zaire is so vast, impenetrable and lacking in infrastructure that it scarcely functions as a unified country. As Leon Kengo wa Dondo, the Prime Minister, said in London last week, there are more than 440 tribes in Zaire with almost as many languages. Control of a country the size of Western Europe by the Government in Kinshasa has always been weak; with President Mobutu now absent for more than six weeks and reportedly suffering from cancer, his Government is scarcely able to control the situation in the east or organise a military response by the ill-disciplined army.

Long pent-up resentment of Mr Mobutu's 31-year rule is uniting his opponents. Until now Mr Mobutu has played off his enemies against one

another, co-opting them with concessions and money. Diplomats in Kinshasa insist that the country is unlikely to break apart, as the landlocked provinces, without communications or proper links to the outside world, cannot function as independent states.

Nevertheless, central control has rarely been weaker or popular resentment stronger. Shaba, the copper-rich province in the south, is the former Katanga, whose declaration of independence under Moïse Tshombe in June 1960 was the immediate cause of the Congo civil war that broke out shortly after independence from Belgium. Shaba, richer and better placed than other areas to cut its links with the West, is pushing for greater autonomy; Kivu, to the east, has been destabilised by the recent fighting; and Kasai has refused to adopt the new currency promulgated by President Mobutu in 1992.

Mr Mobutu holds a trump card: a vast personal fortune, estimated at between \$3 billion (£1.8 billion) and \$5 billion. Until the beginning of the

1990s he had the indirect backing of the West, especially of America, as he posed as a bulwark against communism in Africa. After the insurrection in 1992, leading to riots in the capital, a bloody rampage by the army turned loose on the population, and the establishment of a parallel rival government, he has lost all outside support.

Mr Mobutu, manoeuvring among rival forces, appointed Mr Kengo wa Dondo, a prominent lawyer, as a compromise, knowing that the Prime Minister was barred from challenging him for the presidency because his father had been Polish, and his mother half Rwandan Tutsi.

Zaire's vast potential wealth continues to attract Western interest and gives the country a strategic importance that underpins Western attempts to promote stability and development. Its main mineral exports are copper and cobalt, and although production has slumped in the past decade it still has huge untapped reserves in the southern copperbelt in Shaba. Zaire

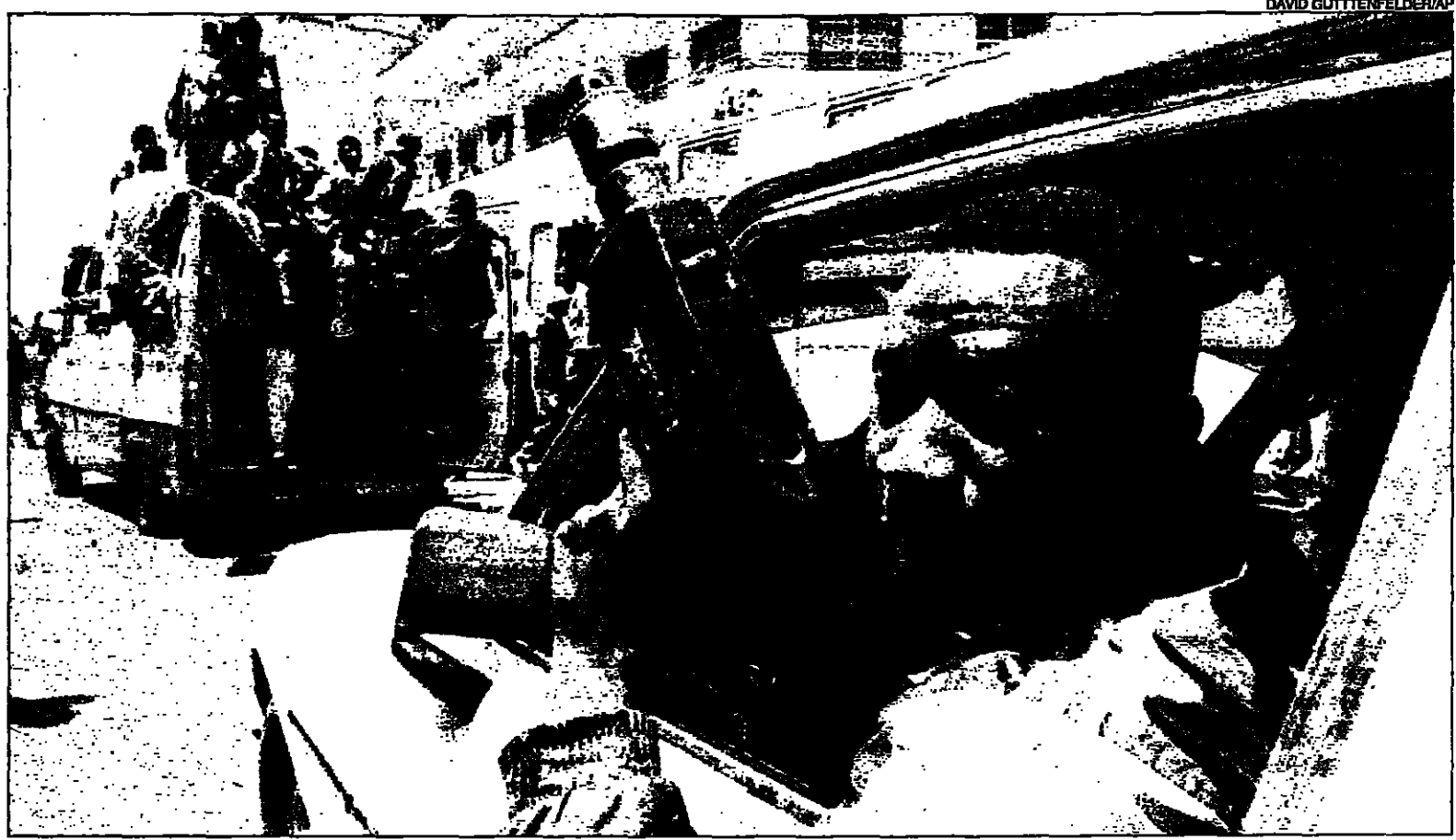
also holds about 28 per cent of the world's cobalt reserves, and is the third largest producer of industrial rough diamonds after Australia and the former Soviet Union.

Zaire's armed forces number 30,000, under the command of General Eluki Mongo Aundu. The army has little offensive capacity and is little better than a rabble.

The latest ethnic tensions in the east centre on the Banyamulenge. Tutsi cattleherders who migrated to the area two centuries ago. The Government recently disenfranchised the Banyamulenge and the presence of Rwandan Hutu extremists in refugee camps exacerbated tensions. Mr Kengo wa Dondo last week

insisted that these people were now "stateless" and the problem had to be "solved" before the next election. His implicit warning helped to convince the Tutsis that they had little alternative but to take up arms against a possible new genocide from Hutus in alliance with the Zairean Army.

Leading article, page 23



Zaireans flaunt mock weapons as they drive around Kinshasa yesterday demanding tougher government action against the Tutsi rebels

Rebel fighters set their sights on the capture of Kinshasa

FROM SAM KILEY IN UVIRA, EASTERN ZAIRE

GUARDED by a elderly pygmy in mismatched training shoes and a young Tutsi warrior in a smart camouflaged military flying suit, the leader of East Zaire's rebels yesterday said in a humble bungalow and promised to lead a "massive movement" to overthrow President Mobutu of Zaire.

Laurent Kabila, the chairman of the Alliance of Democratic Forces for Liberation (Congo-Zaire), said his organisation had set up recruitment bases all over the country to drive Mr Mobutu from power. The alliance's forces have already taken one provincial capital, Bukavu, and they were yesterday reported to have captured Goma, 200 miles further north.

"Our aim is to take Kinshasa and Gbadolite [Mr Mobutu's home village and site of his marble palace]," Mr Kabila said.

Unlike many of his fighters, Mr Kabila is a broad-faced Bantu rather than a fine-featured Tutsi, and he revealed a ready sense of humour at a meeting at his headquarters in Uvira, on Lake Tanganyika. He trotted out the usual manifesto of African guerrillas about the "need to overthrow the dictatorship, restore the national administration, and establish a transitional government leading to general elections".

Many have betrayed these ideals over the past five years, but Mr Kabila seems genuine in his ambitions. "We don't kill people unnecessarily in this movement. We just want to restore Congo-Zaire. It is still a country, but the state has collapsed," he said.

Driving through a dozen abandoned refugee camps, which housed 220,000 Hutus from neighbouring Rwanda and Burundi, there was little evidence of the fighting that set off the exodus north. In one area they had clearly fled in a hurry, leaving burst bags of maize lying on the road. Occasionally one could detect the faint smell of rotting corpses.

Thousands of Zairean civilians who fled the fighting have begun returning to their villages and to the town of Uvira. Mr Kabila was anxious to make clear that his fighters were not dominated by Tutsis who have been threatened with extermination by Bukavu's Governor. However, the overwhelming majority were clearly Tutsis.

Zaire's Government is convinced that the uprising in north and south Kivu is a Tutsi plot. Yesterday the Parliament demanded that diplomatic ties be broken with Uganda, Burundi and Rwanda, and said all ethnic forces should be "purged" from the armed forces.

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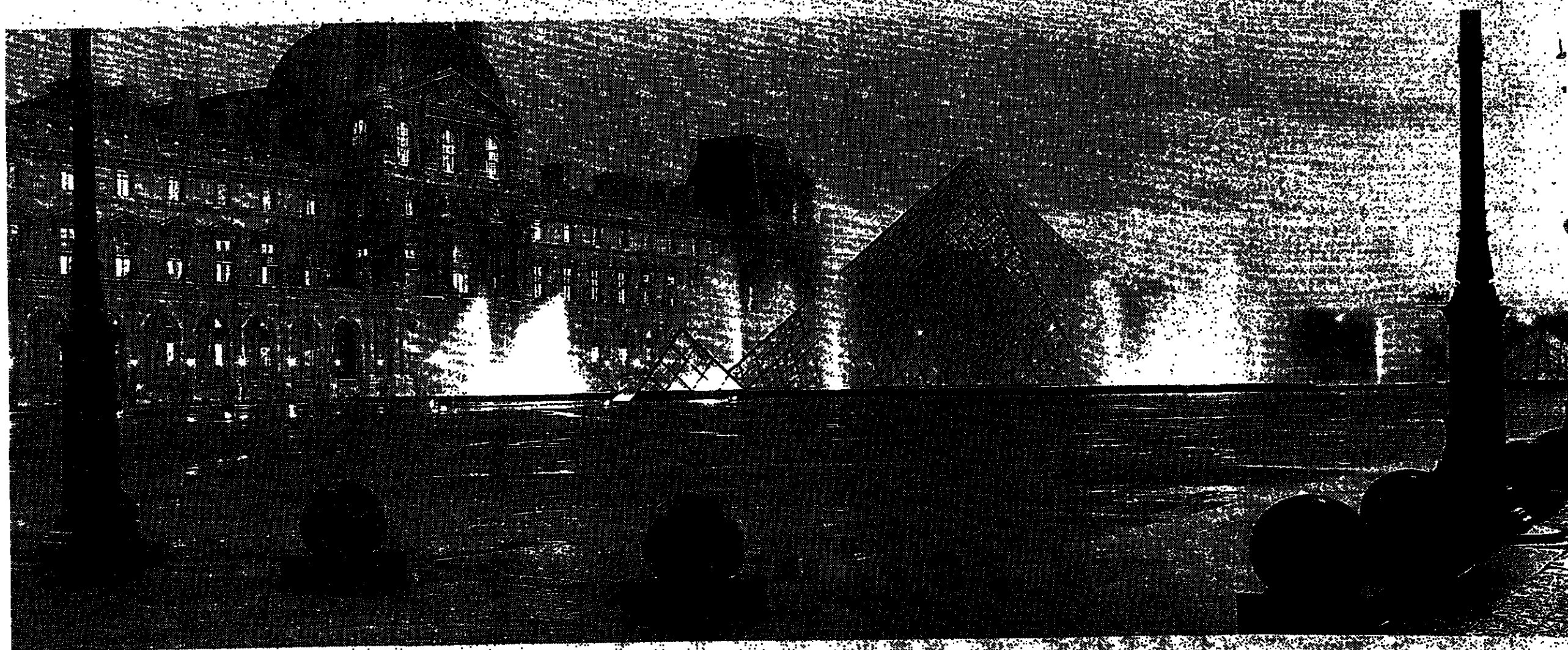
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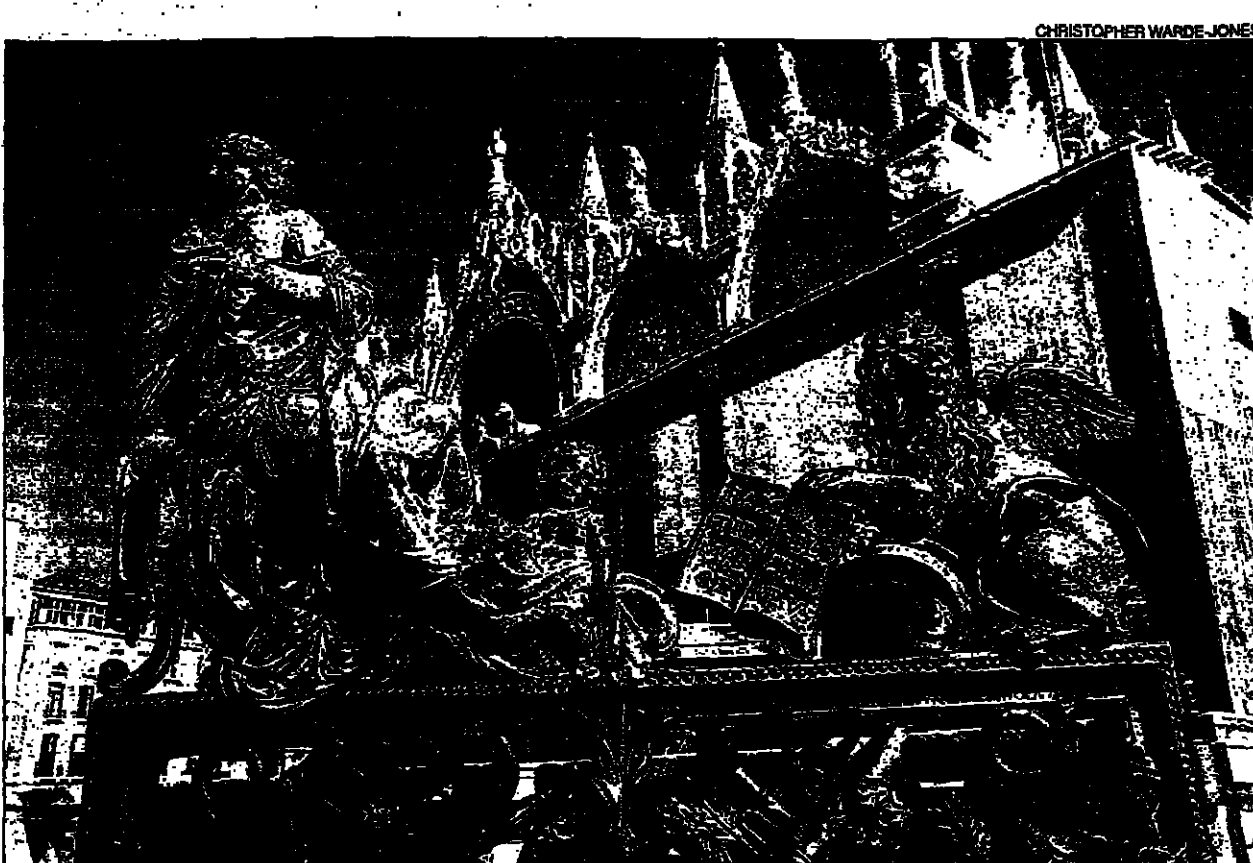
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Exodus renews death threat to Venice

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Influx of 'bunny-huggers' threatens field sports in six states

US hunters take cover for fear of legal ban

FROM QUENTIN LETTIS IN HELENA, MONTANA

AT 6,000ft in Montana's Elkhorn mountains, with the first snow of winter soft underfoot, Vince Yannone, a veteran hunter, gave a weather-beaten squint high to the right, hissed an oath, and dropped smartly on to his belly. "Elk!" whispered Vince hoarsely, his wiry body tensed. "Lots of 'em!"

A short while earlier, Vince, 55, and his old friend Jim "Pos" Posewitz had been chewing on last year's elk jerky and eating snow to slake their thirsts after a two-hour climb up Warm Springs Creek. We had spotted a herd of elk below the ridge that runs off Casey Peak and were planning a pincer movement. Now we had stumbled across yet more brown, plump elk, the noblest game in the American wilderness. The hunting party lay in silence, the only sound being the gurgle of the creek and warning squawks from a raven overhead.

It was a classic autumn experience in the Elkhorns, but one which is under threat. On Tuesday, when American citizens select their President, they will also vote on an array of anti-hunting measures in six states. The places pinpointed by the anti-hunting lobby include previously red-clawed territories such as Colorado, Idaho, Washington and Oregon. With prosperous Californians migrating east in ever bigger numbers, and the gentrification of the once Wild West by genteel "bunny-huggers", the votes could go either way.

Countrymen see the ballots as part of a well-funded, expertly organised persecution of their very way of life. At the Windbag Saloon in Helena's Last Chance Gulch, leather-

ery, mild-mannered hunters cracked their knuckles as they reflected glumly that hunting opponents "just don't understand" animal management. Bill Orsello, a local fireman who has hunted since boyhood, spoke of the time he found himself amid an elk herd in the dark. "Practically came nose to nose with a cow elk!" he recalled. "Boy, was that something!"

Helena, with its population of 30,000, is the capital of Montana and wild deer have been seen on the lawns outside the state legislature. About 50 per cent of local households survive on wild meat, but that number is dropping as more outsiders move in.

Ron Marcoux, of the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, peered sorrowfully into his glass of amber ale and characterised the "antis" as "middle-aged, single, vegetari-

Cougars are now thriving and it's all thanks to hunters

an women from the West and East Coasts who are opposed to the killing of any animals". Montana women are different. A healthy number of them hunt these days, sturdy Big Sky Country lasses with strong hips and downy upper

lips. The controversial motions that will be decided in this election concentrate on fringe activities such as trapping and bear-baiting, but Mr Marcoux and his 100,000 members fear deer, elk and moose-hunting could follow. "They'll pick off the easy targets first," he said.

American field sports enthusiasts have studied the hunting debate in Britain and hope to learn from what they see as the mistakes made. They emphasise the classlessness of American hunting — licences are issued on a ro-

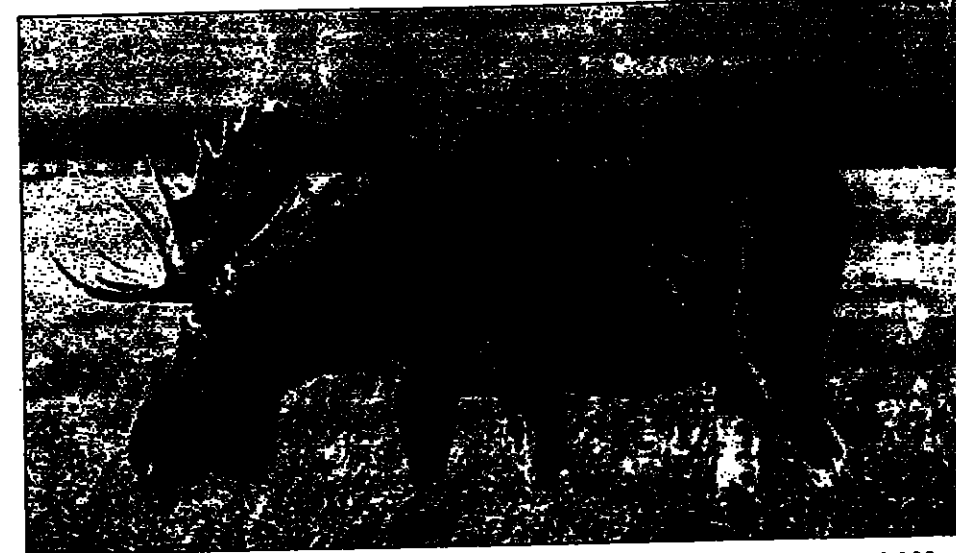


Elk hunters in the Midwest, who claim that their activities have helped to save several species from extinction

bustly democratic basis — and the fact that hunters' initiatives have probably saved the elk and other species from extinction. Orion, a hunters' institute, was formed to propagate the ethics of the chase. "Pos", 61, a former state wildlife warden, is its secretary and tours the country urging hunters to observe a rigorous code of conduct.

"In 1900 there were less than 41,000 elk left in the US. Now there are 950,000," Mr Posewitz said. "A century ago a hunter in Pennsylvania tracked a deer for five days and, on shooting it, claimed he had killed the last deer in that state. Pennsylvania now harvests more than 40,000 deer a year. The mountain lion, or cougar, is the only wild cat in the world whose numbers have risen this century. It is now thriving." All, said "Pos", thanks to hunters.

The grandfather of American conservation was Theodore Roosevelt, the twenty-sixth President, who would leave Washington for weeks to pursue bear, whitetail deer, wolf, and pronghorn. While Vice-President, Roosevelt killed a mountain lion with his bare hands. "Can't see Al Gore



The American elk population has increased this century from 41,000 to 950,000

doing that," said "Pos". Roosevelt, who hung antlers in the White House dining room, wrote that "whoever has hunted the elk, as he looks at his trophies, will always think of the great mountains with the snow lying on their sides; of the odorous breath of the pine branches; of tennis pitched in open glades; of long walks through cool, open forests;

and of great camp fires, where the pitchy stumps flame like giant torches in the darkness". It is hard to imagine such words flowing from the pen of President Clinton. So far neither of the two main political parties has issued support for the anti-hunting lobby.

Over a camp fire up in the Elkhorns, after the elk had scented our presence and run out of range, and as the afternoon gave way to evening, Vince and "Pos" fell to hunters' talk. The two old-timers spoke of the regrets of their lives, of their loves, and reflected on death — even the death of hunting. "Pos" said: "Will our grandchildren get to do this? I hope so, but I don't know." The answer may become clear on Tuesday.

Hollywood moguls cast Bard as the new Jane Austen

FROM GILES WHITTILL IN LOS ANGELES

FOR the second time this year, a British writer who died eons before the invention of the cinema is the toast of Hollywood.

With two versions of *Richard III*, a *Twelfth Night* and a raucous contemporary *Romeo and Juliet* on view for American audiences this weekend, "Shakespeare", as one over-excited headline said, "is the new Jane Austen".

Barely six months ago the actress Emma Thompson observed that Austen, with three novels on celluloid and a fourth in the pipeline, would be owed dizzying royalties were she alive today. As Hollywood begins rolling out next year's Oscar contenders it is the Bard's turn to be feted by *Time* magazine as a "natural-born screenwriter".

Whether Will would condone the latest adaptations of his work is another matter. Last night's new release, a version of *Romeo and Juliet* starring Leonardo DiCaprio and Claire Danes, has been called a "turbo-glam teen weeper".

Set in a gang-ridden Latin metropolis 400 years after the play was written, the generally well-reviewed film has its most famous love scene set in a floodlit swimming pool.

Baz Luhrmann, the film's Australian director, suggested in an interview that the approaching millennium was driving film-makers back to classic texts: "They start to

look for those things that have a universal centre, and they say, 'What does it mean to us now?' " The answer, in Hollywood, is money. Planning for the current crop of Shakespeare films began when Kenneth Branagh's 1993 version of *Much Ado About Nothing* showed a healthy \$15 million (£10 million) profit on an \$8 million budget.

Trevor Nunn's *Twelfth Night* opens in America this weekend, and Al Pacino is already starring in a free-form production of *Richard III* called *Looking for Richard*, in which he appears alternately as the king in armour and as himself, wandering Manhattan in a baseball cap and pausing for impromptu Shakespeare soliloquies.

The hunchback king can also be seen at select cinemas in America's oldest intact feature film — a silent 1912 version of *Richard III* starring the British Shakespearean Frederick Warde. The film was found in a private cellar this year.

Later this year Branagh's *Hamlet* will open on both sides of the Atlantic.

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Clinton pledges poll cash reform as scandal grows

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON

PRESIDENT CLINTON yesterday called for a comprehensive reform of America's discredited campaign finance laws in an attempt to contain a growing scandal over highly suspect Asian donations to his party that has begun to hurt him in the polls.

Mr Clinton's promise, which was greeted with scepticism, came as Janet Reno, the Attorney-General, ordered a preliminary investigation of those six-figure donations to determine whether there was sufficient evidence of criminal conduct to warrant a special prosecutor.

A Reuters poll suggested Mr Clinton's lead over Bob Dole had shrunk to just five points with four days left. A Washington Post survey gave the President a much more comfortable 16-point advantage, but it also suggested the race was finally starting to tighten and Ross Perot appears to be enjoying a late revival at the President's expense.

The Texas billionaire has for the first time reached double figures after seizing on the so-called "Indagate" scandal to deliver several blistering assaults on the President's ethics and Washington's corruption.

Addressing a huge seafront rally in Santa Barbara, California, Mr Clinton claimed his previous efforts to reform America's widely flouted campaign finance laws had been thwarted by Mr Dole and the



Republican Congress. He insisted the Democrats had "played by the rules" but said it was time to change those regulations to end the corrosive influence of big money in American politics. He specifically proposed a ban on all foreign contributions, but answered none of the questions about the Asian contributions.

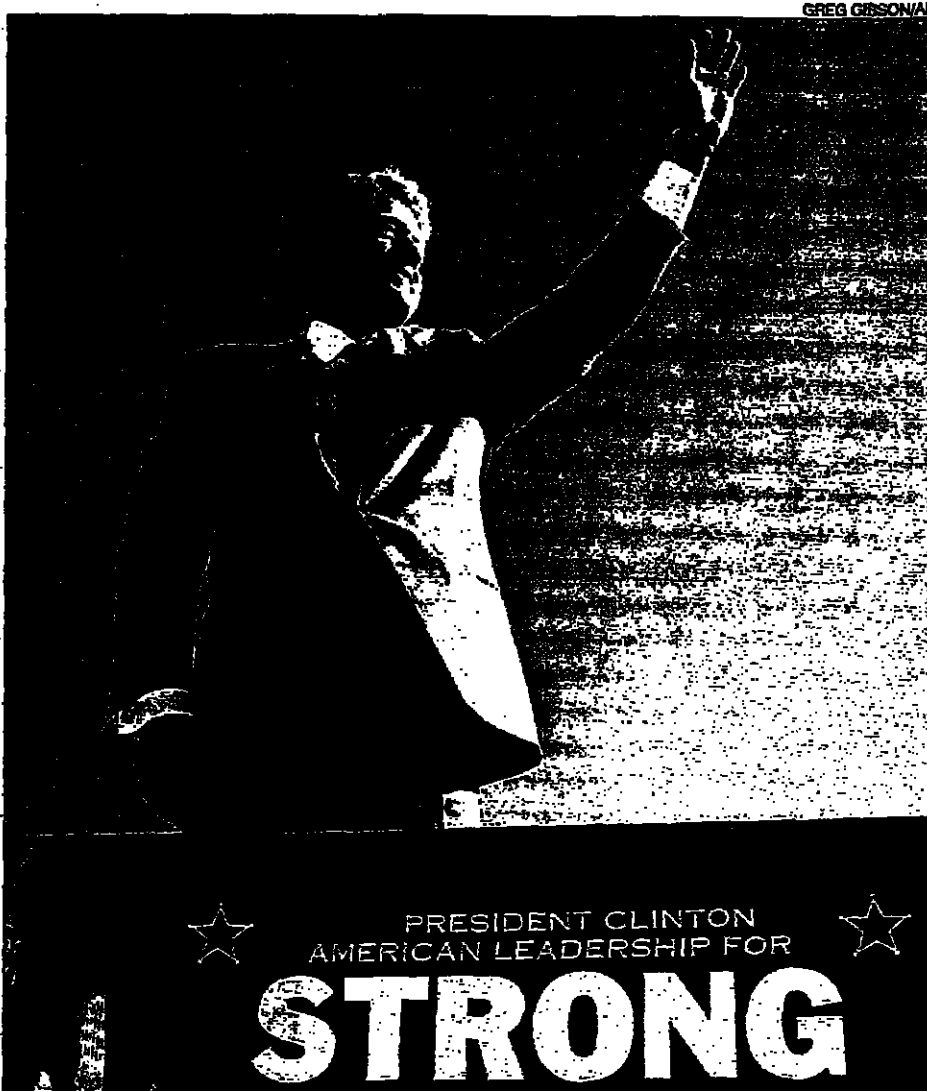
These were mostly solicited by John Huang, a Democratic Party fundraiser, who is now in hiding. Neither the party nor the White House will say why Indonesian, South Korean and Taiwanese businessmen would want to contribute hundreds of thousands of dollars to the President's party, what favours they received in return, and why a middle-ranking party official such as Mr Huang paid scores of visits to the White House this year and last. Contributions from foreigners not resident in America are also illegal.

Mr Dole accused the Clinton campaign of "stonewalling

now, hoping to get through the election" and issued a warning that "there could be a calamity afterwards". Mr Perot predicted "a second Watergate" if Mr Clinton were re-elected.

Campaign reform advocates expressed scepticism about Mr Clinton's promise. "Why should we believe him?" asked Ellen Miller, of the Centre for Responsive Politics. She said: "He promised a thorough cleansing of the system four years ago and then he stood idly by and raised more money and incurred more obligations than any candidate in history."

Ann McBride, president of a citizens' pressure group called Common Cause, said Mr Clinton had to decide whether he wanted to be remembered as "the person who raised the most soft money from the wealthiest Americans or the person who gave a voice back to average citizens".



President Clinton acknowledges supporters at a campaign rally in Phoenix, Arizona

Dole's last march makes do with reflected glories

FROM TOM RHODES IN COLUMBUS, OHIO

THE final four-day mission to conquer the White House began like a military farewell in Ohio yesterday as Bob Dole, flanked by former Presidents Gerald Ford and George Bush, leaned heavily on America's past in a desperate attempt to secure his future.

First to the stage in Columbus was Mr Ford, a former naval officer, then Mr Bush, the youngest naval pilot to enlist in the Second World War, and finally the wounded infantryman who would be President of the United States.

Top Gun theme music blared through the small hall of Capital University, providing the most appropriate entrance for the former Presidents. Not, however, for Mr Dole, who stood almost embarrassed to one side, basking in the reflected glory of the Republican elder statesmen.

This was the starting point for '96 Victory Tour, the last-ditch effort by the Dole campaign to gain a momentum that has eluded its candidate. Yesterday it was Ohio and Michigan. Last night Detroit,

and then stops from New Jersey to Kentucky, Colorado to California, before voting 96 hours later on Tuesday in his home town of Russell, Kansas.

There would be only short stops and few meal breaks. Bob Dole may be 73, but the message from Columbus was that character alone had made him strong enough for the fight. It was his Longest Day and, however sceptical they appeared, his seniors were prepared to give their colleague a rousing send-off to confront the chasm in the polls between the Republican and President Clinton.

The theme enlisted by each speaker involved the integrity of Mr Dole versus the scandal-ridden Democratic White House. The recurring mantra was the now daily revelations about how foreign nationals have helped to fund the Clinton campaign.

With his march across America, Mr Dole may have finally adopted the tactic of Mr Clinton, but few — the challenger apart — believe it more than a valedictory tour.

Mississippi death sparks violence

FROM QUENTIN LETTS IN NEW YORK

A CURFEW was imposed in a Mississippi town after unrest by youths following the death of a black motorist.

Hundreds of police officers were deployed on the streets of Leland, a small town north of Jackson. The violence began in apparent protest at police involvement in the gashot death of a black driver two weeks ago, but the local police chief described the violence as casual lawlessness.

Stones, bottles and petrol bombs were thrown before a riot squad restored order. Shop fronts were destroyed.

The dead driver, Aaron White, 38, was shot, apparently by a white policeman, after he left the scene of a traffic accident on October 17. Police said a white officer fired a shot in the direction of the dead man's car after hearing a gun go off. White, the owner of

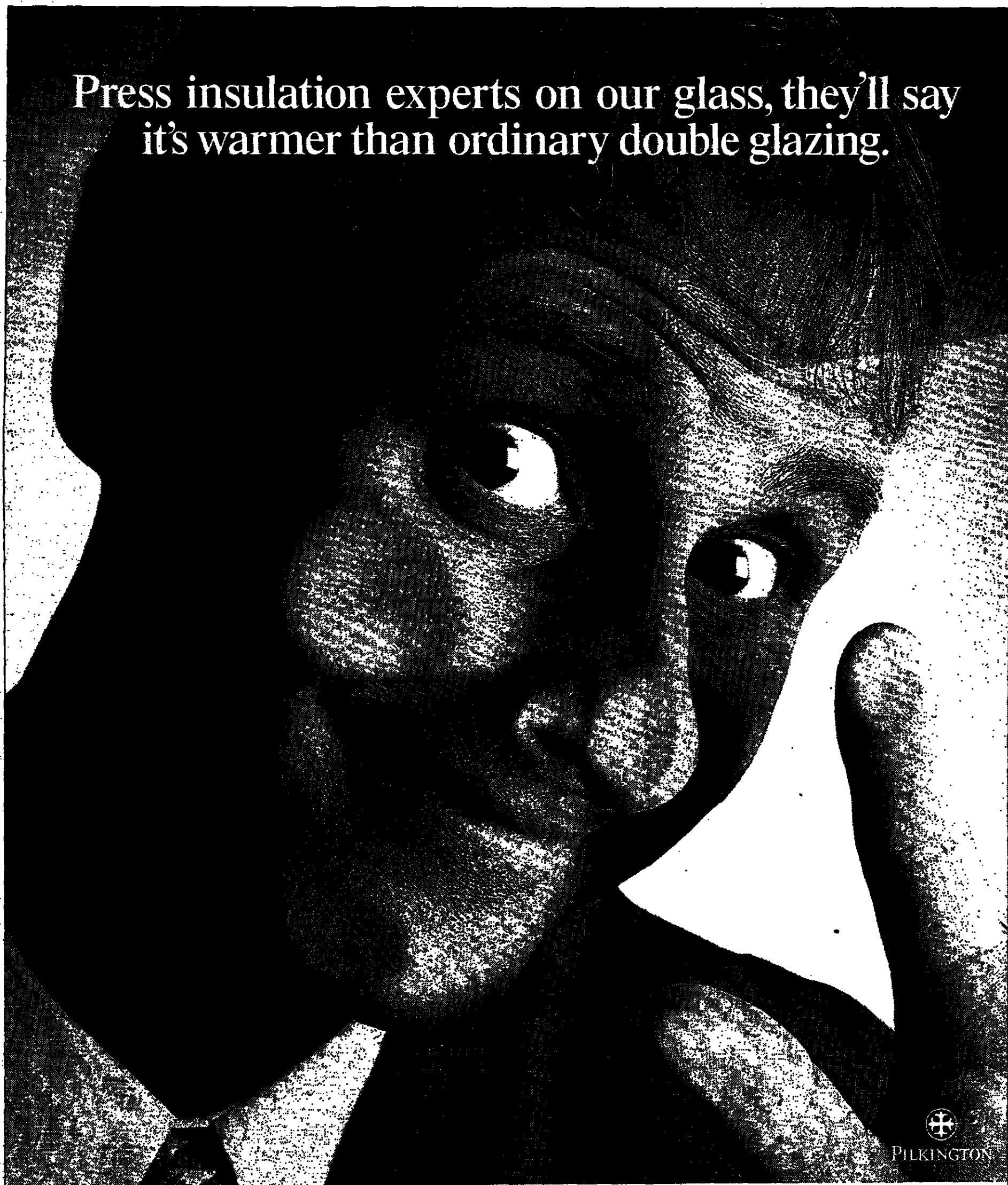
a television-repair business, was found yards from his vehicle in some bushes and an official pathologist said he had been hit by a .38 calibre slug. The police officer suspected of firing the shot was found to have a .40 calibre gun.

Sympathisers gathered on Thursday night to protest about his death, which they called a cover-up. The trouble started later.

Virgie Cannon, a protester, criticised the curfew. "They're locking us in the house like animals," he said. Police Chief Mike Dees said the rioters were "drug dealers and gang members" who were simply causing trouble.

The unrest invited comparisons with a riot last week in St Petersburg, Florida. That also began after the death of a black motorist following a minor traffic infringement.

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Spin-doctor extraordinaire despairs at trying to sell caustic and brittle Juppé

Monsieur Media loses grip

EVERY Monday morning a short, bald man in a sharp suit slips into Jacques Chirac's office at the Elysée Palace for a private talk with the French President. On Tuesday afternoons, the same man is to be found at the Hôtel Matignon, the Prime Minister's office, huddled with Alain Juppé. On Thursday he is back at the Elysée again.

He is Jacques Pilhan, political image-maker and spin-doctor extraordinaire, one of the most powerful and least visible men in France. For 12 years M Pilhan, better known as "Monsieur Media", worked behind the scenes fashioning the public persona of President Mitterrand. When not burnishing the image of the Socialist leader, M Pilhan was busy blackening the name of his opponents,

PARIS FILE
by BEN
MACINTYRE



including M Chirac. It was, therefore, with surprise and no little resentment that the Gaullist faithful discovered M Pilhan had been appointed chief communications adviser to both M Chirac and his Prime Minister.

A shadowy figure, M Pilhan is rarely seen in public and his views are seldom directly cited in the French media, but his spinning powers are legendary. M Pilhan, however, has a problem. Moulding M Chirac for public consumption is

one thing — the President is a malleable personality of great charm who has at least five more years in office — but M Juppé is an altogether tougher proposition. Brittle, caustic and clever, the Prime Minister is simply "not the sort of communicator M Pilhan wants to have", an adviser said. Last week it was revealed that the Elysée guru had presented the President with a stark assessment: M Juppé's record-breaking unpopularity was having a knock-on effect on his boss, he reportedly explained, and the President and the Prime Minister were sinking in the polls in tandem. Suddenly the question of M Juppé's possible replacement was out in the open. Instead of brushing aside the issue, M Chirac was asking advisers: "Who would you see replacing Juppé?"

M Pilhan, one way or the other, will surely be relieved of the impossible task of trying to make M Juppé into a popular leader before long. A cartoon in the satirical *Le Canard Enchaîné* this week had the President telephoning his spin-doctor for a prescription. "Hello Pilhan, who would you see replacing Juppé?" he asks, whereupon Monsieur Media trots out the usual names. Then the President makes another call: "Hello Juppé, who would you see replacing Pilhan?"



Jacques Pilhan, among the most powerful and least visible men in France, thinks President Chirac should ditch Alain Juppé

Wellington kept costs from going through roof

THE Pompidou Centre is shutting most of its galleries to carry out renovation work, the Paris Opéra has a vast hair-net to prevent bits of the wall flying off, the marble on the Grande Arche at La Défense is cracking and now another notable example of Paris architecture, the British Ambassador's residence, is undergoing restoration.

But whereas the roof of the Hôtel de Clugny has held strong for 274 years without needing attention, the Pompidou Centre, designed by British architect Lord Rogers, has lasted just 20 before requiring an overhaul — suggesting that the 18th-century builders may have known something that their modern counterparts do not.

When the Duke of Wellington was shopping for a building in 1814 he was offered a choice between the Hôtel de Clugny, the massive Hôtel Clugny and the Elysée Palace itself. The canny duke selected the building on the Rue du Faubourg Saint Honoré because it was already fully furnished by Pauline Borghese, Napoleon's sister. Latter-day Foreign Office bean-counters may also be pleased with the choice, since the ambassador's residence also has a rather snazzy roof than that of the French President's.

Calculator adds up to a loser

AS THE French Cabinet sat pondering the future of European monetary union this week, President Chirac had a brainwave: the way to convince the French of the benefits of a single currency, he declared, is to hand out millions of key-rings containing a special calculator that would convert francs into euros. Voters are more concerned

with how much the government austerity drive before EMU is costing them now. The idea has met with a deafening silence but the President will not be put off. The tiny calculator, provisionally named Monette, should be "user-friendly, strong, easy to read for the short-sighted and widely available to the population", he enthused.

Spain gets royal view of nature

FROM TUNKU VARADARAJAN IN MADRID

THE passion of princes for ecology and conservation, a phenomenon well known to contemporary Britons, will blaze on Spanish television from tomorrow with the start of a ten-part nature programme presented and directed by Crown Prince Felipe.

The 29-year-old heir to the throne has had little previous experience of either ecology or the art of television, but has immersed himself over the last two years in the making of the series.

Entitled *La España Salvaje* (Wild Spain), it aims to generate among Spaniards, a people who have often been accused of displaying a contemptuous attitude to the environment, "a better understanding of the needs and beauty of nature".

The ambitious series, which cost £2.5 million to produce, is the first made in Spain starring a member of the Royal Family. It will show Prince Felipe in a variety of Spain's natural parks, expatiating on the eco-system, in conversation with wizened old shepherds, examining eagles' nests, and stalking brown bears with a camera.

Prince Felipe's television debut promises to be more felicitous than that of his father, King Juan Carlos, four years ago. The King appeared in a frank BBC television



Prince Felipe: a TV first

interview with Selina Scott and was thought by observers in Spain to have struck an altogether too relaxed equation with the British journalist.

□ Ape date: Barcelona's acclaimed albino gorilla, the only one in the world, yesterday celebrated 30 years of residence in the city's zoo.

Copito de Nieve, or Snowflake, dined on a special basket of aubergines, cabbage, green peppers and bananas, a gift from the city's town hall.

Taking advantage of a public holiday, hundreds of families visited Copito de Nieve, whose gifts included a 6ft-high birthday cake and a football signed by the players of the Barcelona football club.

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OPINION

A dome too far: what's the point of marking the millennium with this expensive funfair?



THEATRE

Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* comes to the National with the superb Alun Armstrong

THE TIMES ARTS

MUSIC

Leonard Slatkin leads the Philharmonia through the First Symphony of Elgar



ON MONDAY

Thomas Allen's anniversary *Don Giovanni* at Covent Garden, and all the other top shows reviewed

When I was a music student a wise old tutor once interrupted my ham-fisted, banana-fingered, turnip-brained attempts at keyboard improvisation with the damning comment: "You know, a player who bashes the notes too loudly is usually over-compensating for a poor grasp of harmony."

Not strictly true, of course. Beethoven pounded the ivories so hard that he wrecked his piano, while Prokofiev and Rachmaninov — no strangers to the well-crafted cadence — had pinkies that could crush walnuts.

But my tutor's remark held a deeper truth. Big, grand gestures disguise small, feeble thoughts. Empty vessels make the most noise. Cream rises, but froth rises higher. You get the idea.

Which brings us to the millennium. Big word, difficult to spell, and for the average British citizen a topic that is about as gripping as a tour of Ukrainian laundries. Nevertheless, we appear to be planning a weird, year-long exhi-

bition to celebrate the Big Two-Two-O. This giant party will be held on a bleak peninsula of contaminated land which the PR people call "Greenwich", though it is almost as far by (unbuilt) road from the Cutty Sark, geographically and culturally, as Brixton is from Buckingham Palace.

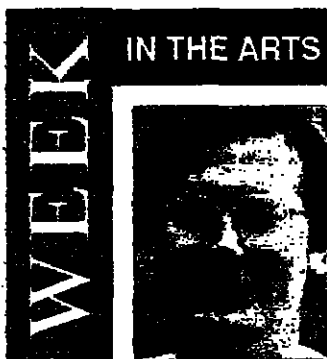
Cleaning up this long-standing blot on the Thames landscape has never struck the Great and the Good as a priority before. After all, it's a long way from Hampstead. But now they have barely 1,000 days left to prepare their 1,000-year celebration. And like the homeowner faced with a burst pipe, panic has induced a reckless suspension of normal financial judgement. Well, would you spend £500 million on a roof?

True, it's more than a roof — but then, it will probably end up being a lot more than £500 million. It

will be the "world's biggest dome". It will house lots of amazing "time" shows, like... well, details of "Milly World" aren't quite available yet, but half a billion quid should buy a lot of clocks.

And of course this dome does come from the House of Richard Rogers, one of the "giants" of British architecture. What's more, the other "giant", Norman Foster, is designing the new Tube station for the site — which will, I'm told, be "bigger below ground than Wembley Stadium is above". Naturally, one would expect nothing less from a man who plans to add a modest little 96-storey "Millennium Tower" to the City of London skyline. London Underground will doubtless supply giant gaps between the trains, to match the scale of everything else.

Well, call me a killjoy if you like. But when I read yesterday's "wow,



RICHARD MORRISON

you ain't seen nuffink yet" news reports I experienced two very queasy emotions. First, I felt trapped in some bizarre opera plot — perhaps one of the lesser Meyerbeers — in which preposter-

ous and incredible things happen but nobody minds because we accept that it's only make-believe. Well, if it is only make-believe, could the fat lady hurry up and sing, please. Or will someone stop the show and let me get off?

Secondly, I recalled with a jolt what my tutor had said, all those years ago. For what is this pointless £500 million dome if it isn't the monster equivalent of a musician making a lot of noise because he hasn't got a clue what the right harmony is? Does Rogers know what the Millennium Exhibition is supposed to be for? Do any of us? Do the big City cheeses who are being squeezed by the headline heavies to hand over £50 million of their shareholders' jolly?

Perhaps they envisage a glorified trade fair: a chance to flex their

fanciest logos in front of 12 million people. Fine. But do we want to celebrate 1,000 years of human achievement with a souped-up Ideal Home Exhibition under what looks like an overgrown saucer held up with chopsticks and string?

As the music-hall ditty aptly puts it: "No, no — a thousand times no!". What probably started as an amusing dinner-party game ("I say, everyone: what sort of bash should we throw on New Year's Eve, 1999?") has turned into a waking nightmare.

It would be a national joke, except that it's not funny. If the millennium must be celebrated by profligate expenditure, the focus should surely be on the future: on the next century's citizens. Yet this is a country that currently cannot guarantee to give its children schooling; that is helpless to stop

drugs being hawked outside school gates; that has sold off playing-fields and disbanded music centres; that has allowed the once-robust fabric of voluntary youth organisations to wither to the point where teenagers have nothing to do on many estates except make trouble.

Pour £500 million into rectifying any of that, and you would have a millennium project worth shouting about. But this is also a country whose leaders appear expert only at passing the buck. Which is what this giant irrelevance in "Greenwich" amounts to: another exercise in dodging the issue. A vastly expensive funfair will be cobbled together because it's easier to do that for the millennium than attempt the more useful task of putting our Humpty-Dumpty nation together again.

What a waste of a date that occurs only once in every 30 generations. We couldn't expect genius, but we could expect vision. Instead, we've been handed a flying saucer of whimsy.

BILL HEWISON

Modified pomp

AMONG American conductors Leonard Slatkin is one with a special affinity for English music, especially for Elgar, whose imposing First Symphony was the main work in the first of his two programmes with the Philharmonia. He favoured a seating plan for the strings that is unusual nowadays, with cellos and basses to his left inside the first violins, and the second violins on the outside opposite them. To my ears it achieved a more immediate impression of the music's vertical range, not least in communicating the despair that suffuses what Elgar called the "massive hope" of the first movement.

Only the coarseness of the brass instruments marred the effect, and the playing throughout was markedly less polished than is customary from this orchestra. It added something of a snarl to the brisk second movement, and was less than pristine in the interplay of woodwind during the Adagio. The finale, however, achieved the requisite sense of grandeur.

Philharmonia/
Slatkin
Festival Hall

Before this, Stephen Kovacevich was a spirited soloist in the last of Mozart's piano concertos, K595 in B flat. He avoided any false note of elegy, and even imparted a touch of urgency to contrast with the orchestra's more casual approach.

The pianist allowed himself some discreet embellishment in the central Larghetto, which was entirely acceptable, and offered a faintly elaborate cadenza in the finale. With generally crisp rhythms and a becoming elegance of woodwind playing that earned the players a special call at the end, it was the kind of performance that remained very much on the surface of the music.

NOEL GOODWIN

You'll buy his company

THEATRE

**Death of a Salesman
Lyttelton**

Arthur Miller's stage directions ask for his *Death of a Salesman* to be set in a tiny, fragile house surrounded by a "solid vault of apartment houses". David Thacker and his designer, Fran Thompson, use the Lyttelton revolve rather differently. Dead centre is a tree whose branches are in full leaf, but whose trunk has been severed clean through.

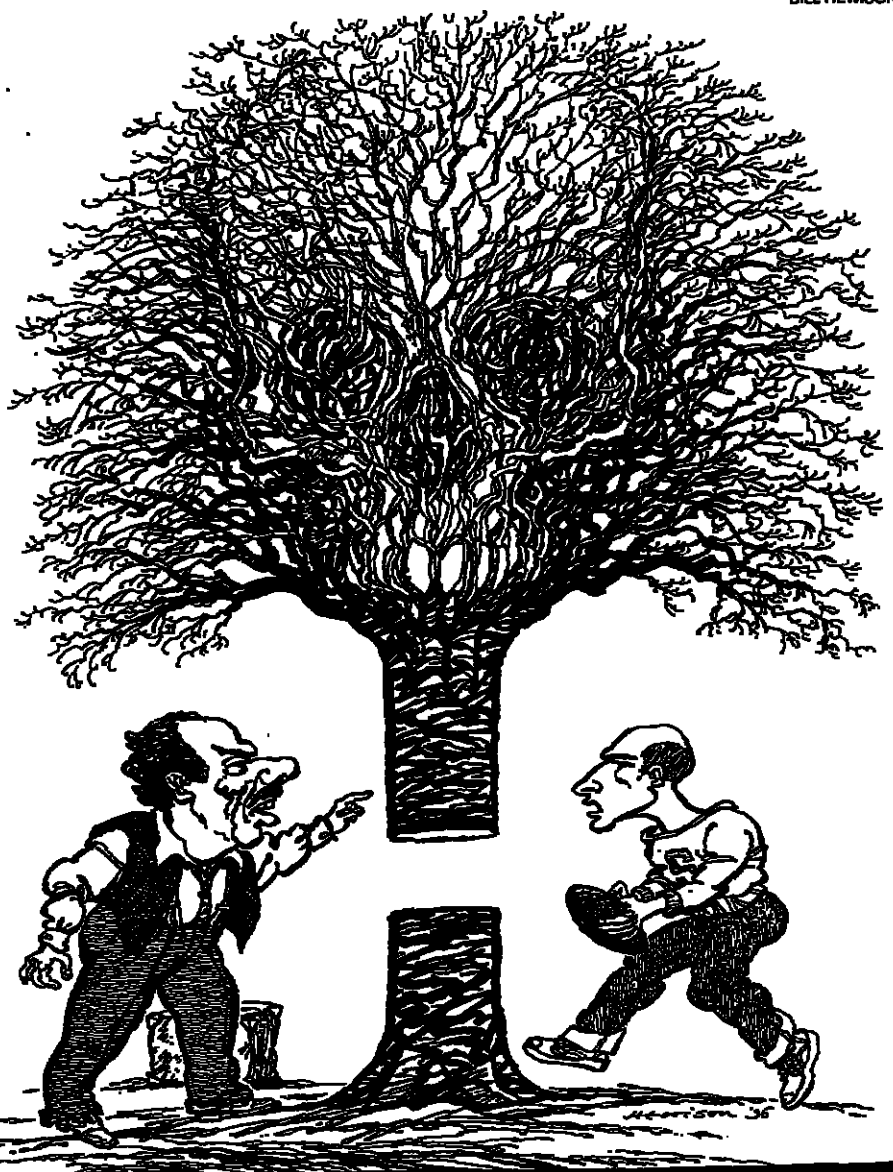
Round it move bits and pieces from salesman Willy Loman's life: not only chairs, tables and beds, but the wonky refrigerator he bought because it was expensively advertised and the red Chevy in which he once swaggered through New England like Mr Toad.

It is a fanciful way of evoking 1940s Brooklyn, but

Miller's directions also say the set should have "an air of the dream", and there is a purpose to it all. One of the play's main ideas is that nature — people, forests, everything — has been violated by the growth of cities. More specifically, Alun Armstrong's marvellous Loman has something of the broken elm or riven oak about him. The human potential is there, but it has been thwarted, damaged, left ungranted and unfulfilled.

The main reason Miller's play will remain a classic is that it speaks so powerfully of human waste. Willy Loman has been sucked and suckered into a world where reality and realism always take second, third and fourth place to muddled hopes of glory effortlessly achieved. Big ads guarantee a good fridge. "Personality" promises professional success. Backslapping noises mean lasting friendship. Dreams, fantasies and lies bring a sound future. With beliefs like those corroding Loman and his family, no wonder everything he touches falls to pieces.

The irony is that while his mind is enslaved by glitter, his heart is not. What Loman fundamentally values, and what gives him value, is his bond with his sons, especially his elder one.

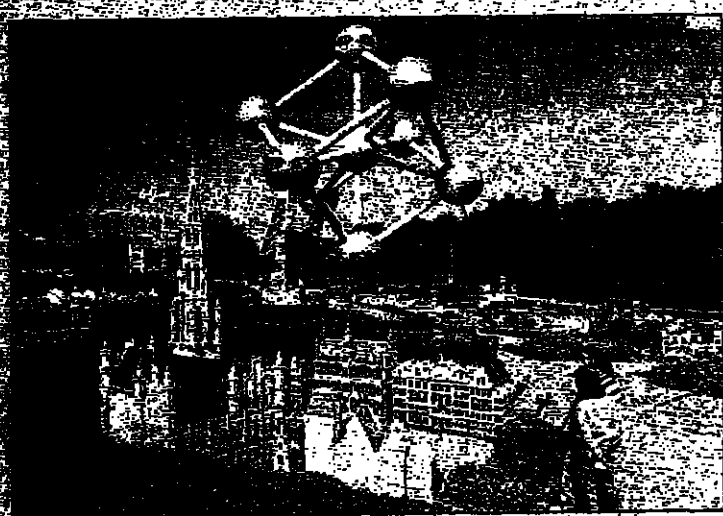


Alun Armstrong as Willy Loman and Mark Strong as Biff in Miller's masterpiece

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CHANGING TIMES

This is not lost on Armstrong. He may trudge onstage looking as shattered as a walrus that has survived a mauling by a ship's propeller. He may be edgy, anxious or bouncy, depending on whether he is mentally revisiting the past or beached in the present.

But his finest scenes are those with Mark Strong's Biff. Whether anger, elation or sheer bewilderment is paramount at the time, whether the two of them are yelling at each other or caught in a fumbling, forgiving embrace, you are always aware that the precipitating emotion is love.

That is as it should be, but then so is everything else in what will be remembered as one of Thacker's crispest, most lucid productions. Strong forcefully conveys the pain of facing out one's personal inadequacies, as well as the awful stress of making the likes of Loman acknowledge them.

Corey Johnson brings a nice mix of arrogance and unease to his younger brother, the glossy but insecure philanderer, Happy. Margorie Yates adds what unsentimental grit she can to the role of Willy's improbably devoted wife, Linda, by common consent the least satisfactory character in the play.

But mainly it is Armstrong's evening. He doesn't show us the cocky vulgarian who once

swapped dirty jokes with the buyers, as Warren Mitchell did, nor does he cheerily dance off to his suicide as if clutching a big deal with God, like Dustin Hoffman.

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John Redwood proposes a Budget to help married couples battling to make a living while raising children and leading decent lives

The family is under pressure. By the family I mean the old-fashioned sort, those who court, wed and have children in that order: those who think that father and mother should create a home first and then stay together at least while the children are young and in need of their joint love and security: those who believe that, barring accident or illness, they should pay their own way and keep out of trouble.

Many families like these are finding it difficult. Some are cursed with no work, others with too much work. It can be a strain for a family to find there is no work for either mother or father. It can be a different kind of strain for both to have demanding jobs. For the one, there is never enough money to afford luxuries. Life is a juggle: can the new blazer and the school trip be afforded this month? For the other there is enough money for trips and toys but never enough time. Taking the baby to crèche and the child to primary school through the peak hour traffic is just another thing on the list, along with dropping the dry cleaning off and ensuring that the casserole is in the

Fiscal props for family virtues

oven. I am not sure whether it is better for children to be short of parental cash or parental attention. Many parents cope heroically. Some low-income families make up for the lack of expensive treats with a great sense of fun and togetherness. They have the time to be attentive parents. Some hardworking families make sure there is time in the day or at weekends to play and talk with their offspring, to pass on values and pleasures. Others cannot manage. Some families with two unemployed adults pass on a sense of hopelessness, and unemployment cascades through the generations. Some busy families end up snarling at each other and seeing family relationships as just one more impossible hill to climb.

Politicians cannot find all the answers to these problems. They are subjected to many of the same pressures. Offering solace, a sense of purpose or direction, may help.

But nor should the politician too readily assume the role of the preacher. He too is in a moral glass house and must be careful how he casts his stones.

Money is not the whole answer, but helping to solve the money problem for families is partly within the politician's gift. This coming Budget should be a Budget which puts the needs of families high on the list. The Prime Minister and the Chancellor have both told us that reform of capital taxes and reducing income tax are their priorities. I would urge them to spare a little as well to help the families of Britain that are under pressure.

The dignity and purpose of a family is increased if at least one of the parents has a job. Have a job and you have to get up in the morning and shave or put on your make-up. You have to mend the hole in the pocket, to have the jacket or dress cleaned. Taking some

pride in yourself gives the family a lift. Bringing home a pay packet should help to improve the family's finances.

I ask the Chancellor to make it easier for small businesses to expand. There are more than three million self-employed people in Britain. Many find the idea of registering for VAT, filling out National Insurance details and mastering the intricacies of Pay-As-You-Earn income tax too much to contemplate. They decide to stay small and not to take on their first employee. We should make it easier for them. Why not double the VAT threshold, so that a one-man business without having to work some of the week for Customs and Excise? Why not offer a one or two-year National Insurance holiday to any self-employed person hiring his first employee, if that person has been unemployed for more than six months? And could not

that first employee be responsible for his own income tax for the first year, while the business got used to its new size? If only one in ten of all the small businesses wanted to do this, it would make a big dent in the unemployed totals.

The Conservative Party has rightly stood against a minimum wage: not because we like low wages for some people, but because we know the choice for some is low wage or no wage.

The best path to a better-paid job — the way most of us have trod — is from a less well-paid job. We should be clearer that we support a minimum income rather than a minimum wage. We use the tax and benefit system to make sure that those who earn less still have enough to live on. For those with no jobs, that means income support and housing benefit to take care of the essentials of life. For those on low

incomes with family responsibilities, that means family credit to top up their wages so that it is worthwhile working.

This Budget should look again at how worthwhile it is to work, to marry and to look after your own children. Was it wise to reduce the married couple's allowance? Is family credit set at a sufficient level to help low-income working families? Cutting income tax rates and widening tax bands helps, but some special attention is needed to the plight of the low-income working family. I would like to see a decent increase in the married man's allowance to show that family policy means something, and a further improvement in family credit to help those who are trying to get back into the rhythm of work to look after their families.

Would Benedict ever have become the married man in *Much Ado about Nothing* if Shakespeare's England had our tax and

benefit system? Would not he and Beatrice, with their quick minds and ready wits, have worked out that they would be better off without the wedding ceremony? The tax system must be such that it is always worthwhile working, and it is fully recognised that marriage and children bring their costs.

Is there money enough to do these things? Yes, there is. The present plans for public spending are far too generous. We need all that is planned for teachers, doctors, nurses, police and the Armed Forces, but there is much else besides that can be trimmed. More must be taken from the spending plans than is given back in tax reductions. The country must borrow less, as it has been borrowing too much. That will still leave some room to ease tax on families and make some progress towards the Government's aim of 20p-in-the-pound income tax and no capital taxes. Measures to boost employment will bring their own public spending savings. It is cheaper to top up someone's income or give them a tax break than to keep them on the dole. It is time to cut social security by reducing the need for it.

Don't preach — just stick to the rules

Chanting Major's Little Red Book, the National Forum's moral code for schools, is no use: children need practical guidance

Two documents gaze up at me from my desk. Both are rules purporting to tell young people how to behave. One has reputedly been read by six million Americans and is this week top of the American bestseller list. The other would be binned were it not the product of the Government's curriculum authority.

The first is called *The Rules*. It is a book aimed exclusively at women and subtitled "Time-tested Secrets for Capturing the Heart of Mr Right". The cover is pure Barbara Cartland, with roses, ribbons and a huge engagement ring. It is old-fashioned and cunning. Women should forget feminist nostrums about even-handedness and acknowledge the man as predator and the woman as hunted.

The 35 maxims can be summed up as "play hard to get" and "make him respect you". Rules include: Don't talk to a man first; Don't call him and rarely return his calls; Don't go Dutch on a date; Always end a phone call first; Always end the evening (or the morning) first; Don't accept a Saturday night date after Wednesday (even if you are free).

Out of humanity's crooked timber, said Immanuel Kant, no straight thing was ever made. But the huge appeal of *The Rules* lies in their specificity. Some are silly and some dangerously confusing — not least the implication that when a woman says No she may after all mean Maybe. They require men to initiate everything and could thus lead to the extinction of the notoriously timid American male. But whether *The Rules* are good, bad or obvious, American women appear frantic to have them. They are signing up to Rules seminars, Rules hotlines, Rules Anonymous. They have found a white stick with which to stumble down the nerve-racked path from first meeting to matrimony. If relationships no longer operate under the rules of parent or tribe, they must have another framework. Feminism did not work. Courtship is a ritual. Rituals must have rules.

Compare these rules with those ordered from the National Forum for Values by the British Government via its School Curriculum and Assessment Authority, published on Thursday. This corporatist mish-mash has no more reference to the quandaries facing the young than an 18th-century parsonical bromide. "We as individuals should try to understand our own character, strengths and

weaknesses," burbles the report. "We should strive for knowledge and wisdom throughout life. We should take responsibility for our own lives within our capacities." The Authority agrees some of this may be obvious. I would say it was meaningless.

A teenager worrying about whether to have sex on the second date, or split on a friend, or take an Ecstasy pill, or have an abortion, does not want to be told waffle. He or she wants to be told what to do.

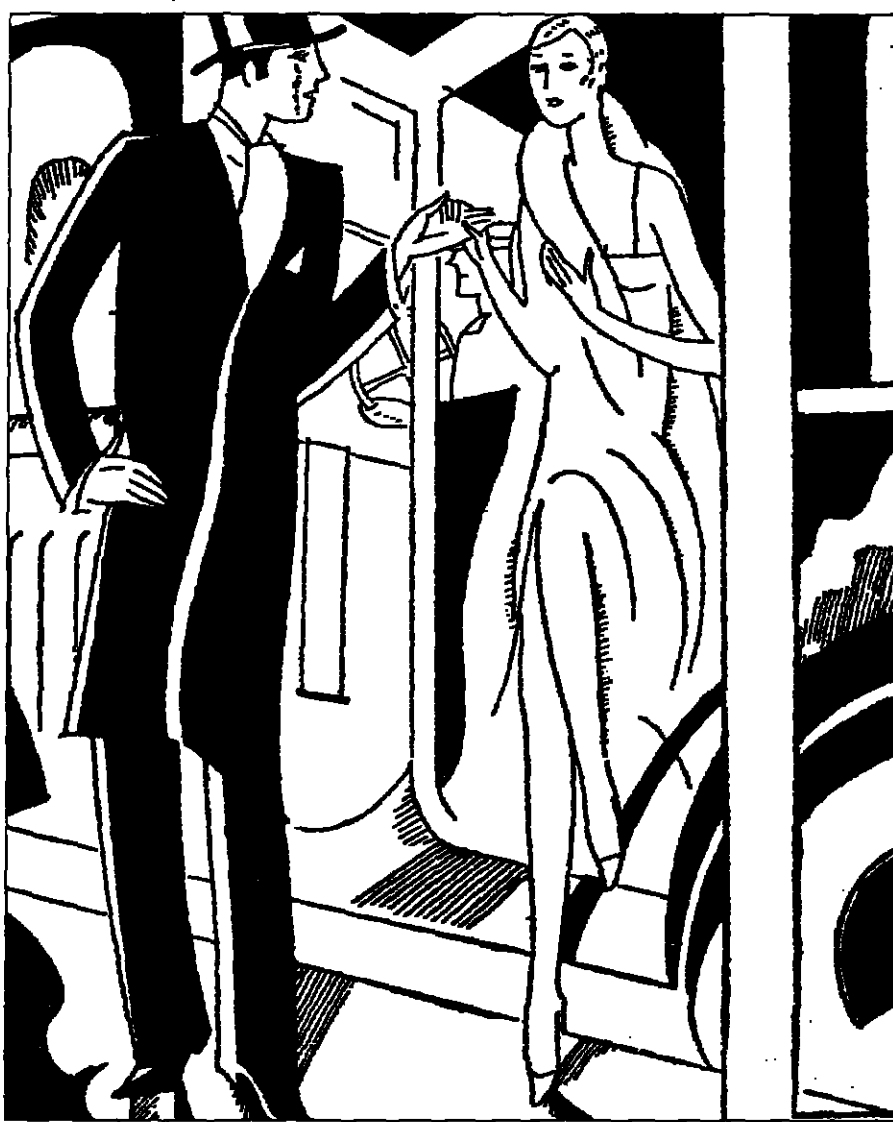
The code's so-called "principles for action on relationships" are as follows: "We value others for themselves, not for what they have or what they can do for us, and we value these relationships as fundamental to our development and the good of the community. Within our relationships we should respect the dignity of all people; tell others they are valued; earn loyalty, trust and confidence; work co-operatively with others; be mutually supportive; respect the beliefs, life, privacy and property of others."

These are mere feel-good nouns strung together by officials and signed off by 150 of the great and the good. Throw enough cooks into the kitchen and, sure enough, you will get spilt broth. As for the intention that the moral code might be "learned by heart", modern Britain is surely not reduced to a land of children chanting Major's Little Red Book. The code is turgid and abstract. Even Mr Pocklington would have balked at its vacuity.

If this is the best Whitehall can do, I should fall back on the Ten Commandments, the Boy Scout's Honour and the Highway Code.

The Rules has been much ridiculed by American men (and women), who spot the tricks and break out laughing. But its content is, to me, undeniably "moral". Its rules are rooted in a woman's expectation of self-respect and desire for kindness. They set out rituals for social and sexual intercourse, in this case to protect women from the emotional turmoil of rejection. (Similar rules might surely be written for men.)

This is sound ethics. As Lord Clark wrote, at the heart of civilisation lies courtesy, "the ritual by which we avoid hurting other people's feelings by satisfying our own egos." The simplest rules for relationships, the pleases, the thank-yous, the sorries, are the building blocks of human happiness and thus of morality.



The Rules, circa 1927: how to help a lady out of a car, from *Good Housekeeping*

"How-To" books cram the bestseller lists. Pedlars of rules are the new priesthood. They have inherited the mysteries not just of the Church but of the oracles of old. They are analysts, therapists, gurus and management consultants. They ask us what we want and tell us how to get it. Do you seek a million dollars, a perfect rose, a better sex life or just Mr Right? We cannot promise you your dreams. But follow our rules and we can at least improve the odds.

Some such books are rubbish. But like the conventions of a constitution or the rules of etiquette, they offer a framework for behaviour. The essence of *The Rules* is not their content, nor their mission "to find Mr Right", but their emphasis on behavioural discipline.

Unlike the British code, they are controversial and tough. They seek to persuade, not tell, young people how to postpone instant gratification for the sake of lasting happiness. Rules prioritise. They trade pleasures and pains, and for an explicit reason. They are the reinforcing bars of the moral imperative.

The one remotely specific conclusion of the British Forum proved too controversial for inclusion: the garbled statement that "marriage and parenting successfully undertaken are very creative of good values in adults and children."

The report decided to "avoid the M-word" and opted for the banal, "We support families in raising children and caring for dependants."

The report's sponsor, Nick Tate of the

Curriculum Authority, was left pleading that he rejected as a lie the thesis that "all morality is relative and that all we can do is agree or disagree". The Forum itself put it differently. They "presumed no consensus on the source or application" of their principles, which I take to mean that we may indeed disagree.

The trouble with such abstraction is that it soon crumbles to the touch. As the philosopher Jonathan Glover says in his admirable guide to everyday morality, *Causing Death and Saving Lives*, the essence of moral choices is that we do argue about them, and argue about their fundamentals. The reason is that "some people think of morality as a set of rules laid down by God", while others feel the rules are there to avoid conflict or to maximise happiness.

Different sources of authority can lead to different conclusions. Some may hold homosexuality, divorce and abortion to be inherently immoral. I disagree with them. We appeal not to the Almighty but to the ballot box.

I cannot say whether *The Rules* are "right or wrong". Their virtue is that they declare their objective — a stable marriage — and suggest practical rules for achieving it. This is morality you can use. Perhaps the market should be the final judge. If ministers will not leave the codification of the courtesies, rituals and formalities of youthful behaviour to parsons, parents and teachers, at least let them choose between gurus.

If Gillian Shepherd thinks she can sell her "good values guide" to the public, let her do so on the bookshop shelf. Set it alongside *The Rules* and see which sells more.

Hallowe'en: treat or trick?

A penny for the Guy but none for devil-worship, says Quentin Letts

In Britain and the United States, this is a spiritually bankrupt time of year. In America, the plastic skeletons and grinning pumpkins are being tidied away after Hallowe'en, that annual dance with the devil which has become a ritual of juvenile terrorism.

In Britain, a nation builds its bonfires to burn the effigy of Guy Fawkes, the well-to-do Protestant who converted to Roman Catholicism, became a mercenary and got mixed up in Catesby's gunpowder plot. As the flames lick around the Guy's feet on Tuesday, up will go the bloodcurdling cheer: "Let 'im fry!"

On Thursday, in Helena, Montana, the entire town was throwing itself into Hallowe'en. Adults, most of them churchgoing people, walked the streets in harlequin tights and death-skull masks. At the state library, the information desk was staffed by a vampire while an orange-suited ghoul saw to the stacking. At a nearby coffee shop, the waiter was clad as a ghost.

It was my third Hallowe'en stateside but none the easier for that. The ghost tried to make a joke but laughter failed me. We English have a curious aversion to fancy dress (unless it is ermine) and we tend to view people in costume as fools.

The modern American parent normally fusses over "Junior" without cease. Yet an entire nation happily sends its young off trick-or-treating, blithely indifferent to the hideous background to it all. Trick or treat is a poisonous little process. Children knock on doors and demand sweets or money. If the stranger refuses, the little ones will sneer, blow raspberries, deface bicycle tyres or fashion some similar act of petty vandalism.

It is all held to be a great joke and American families spend happy hours preparing their costumes. Perhaps the next time a terrorist group wants to screw some concession out of Uncle Sam by placing a bomb under the World Trade Centre, it should simply send the communiqué: "Trick or Treat". Pay up or we detonate.

Hallowe'en arrived in North America with the Irish and Scottish immigrants. It was, by low belief, the night the Antichrist held sway, when pixies, imps and elves called roadside assemblies and witches flew on broomsticks, collecting for unstill spirits as they travelled from door to door. The Scottish tradition was to surround the

Hallowe'en bonfire with a circular trench, symbolic of the sun. Toothless peasants cackled in delight. Villagers ransacked their threadbare larders to produce food for the memory of the dead, believing that it would soothe troubled souls. The hot fistulas of sweets that are handed over to today's children are a relic of those antique fears and foolishness.

In AD 988, St Odilo of Cluny, perceiving the need for some sort of autumnal salute to the fallen, but realising that the pixies had to go, introduced All Souls' Day on November 2. It did without the jack-o'-lanterns and there was none of the fertility dancing or entraining of the old ways. The rites of Hallowe'en were condemned by Popes as sorcery, druidic traditions that added minds and corrupted youth.

In Britain, come 1606, we switched to Guy Fawkes Day. It was not possible to have two bonfires in the same week — with winter looming, it was an irresponsible use of wood — and the authorities seemed happier to see the people celebrate the anniversary of Catesby and Co's collaring than some vestige of the Celtic New Year.

There has been, in recent years, an effort to persuade Britain to reconsider its dropping of Hallowe'en. The greetings-card industry has done its bit, as have candlestick-makers, matchstick-makers, pumpkin farmers, confectioners and the people who manufacture luminous paint. Hallowe'en has great commercial potential. There is also, perhaps, an element of "wannabe-Americanism" and the slack desire of modern Britons to have another excuse for a party. But commercialism and hedonism should not obscure the ugly roots of this pagan celebration.

St Odilo of Cluny was probably right: we do need an autumnal feast day, something to keep us going between Rogation Sunday and Christmas — or, in Nineties-speak, between the autumn and January sales. In these heathen times, alas, All Souls' Day goes ignored, and so it becomes a toss-up between Guy Fawkes Day and Hallowe'en. My call goes to Guy Fawkes. Parliament was saved, Fawkes himself displayed courage in death, and the name of the devil is not invoked. It is a very British occasion and furthermore, there is no need to dress up. Hallowe'en can go to the devil.

After Bernie

LABOUR is unimpressed by the Tory party's latest tactic to oust Bernie Grant, tribal chieftain monarch and Labour MP for Tottenham. Local Conservatives have elected a black candidate to stand against Grant, who dresses in full African regalia at the flick of a zebra's tail and has enjoyed numerous working visits to the Caribbean on behalf of his constituency.



Bernie: full splendour

The man to stand against him is Derek Laud, 32, Afro-Caribbean, and a pin-striped former member of the extreme right-wing Monday Club. Like Mohamed Al Fayed's friend Ian Greer, he runs a lobbying company. "He makes Philip in *Rising Damp* look like Winston Silcott," remarked a friend.

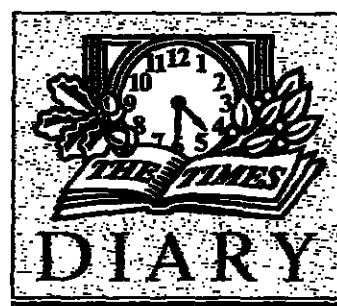
Bernie, he says, deserves a "bloody good hiding. He cannot be taken seriously in today's society: he relies entirely on old-style class rhetoric. He has made very little impact as MP for Tottenham, partly because of his penchant for foreign travel."

"And it's not the colour of your skin that's important," he adds, "but the passion of your heart."

Grant's office remarks that its man enjoyed a huge majority in 1992 and dismisses the challenge. "It's a shame they don't put black candidates in winnable seats."

Tongue tied

WHEN THE NEW Liberal Democrat peer, Lord Thomas of



Gresford, was introduced in the House of Lords on Tuesday, as a former president of the Welsh Liberal Democrats he was determined to prove his credentials as a Welshman. So he recited the Oath of Allegiance in Welsh, to stifled yawns and shuffling feet. "Taking an interminable time about it," complained one peer.

Shortly afterwards the Welsh Labour peer, Lord Cledwyn of Penrhos, approached Lord Thomas and uttered a few fluent phrases of greeting to him in the same tongue. But his blank look revealed that he hadn't understood a word. Some Welshman.

● President Clinton is not only the most powerful man in the Western world, he is also a god. Monks in Lhasa, Tibet, believe the President

— whom they call Klinton, is the reincarnation of the immortal Tibetan god Ganyan Shepa. The press office at the White House is flummoxed.

New script

LIFE as one of the greatest living playwrights will never be enough for a man as queering as Tom Stoppard, as he revealed earlier this week at the 50th birthday party for his fellow playwright and director Simon Gray.

Chatting to his neighbour, a Foreign Office hack, at dinner, he said: "I always wanted to be a diplomat but somehow it never happened."

Too bad he had to settle for writing.

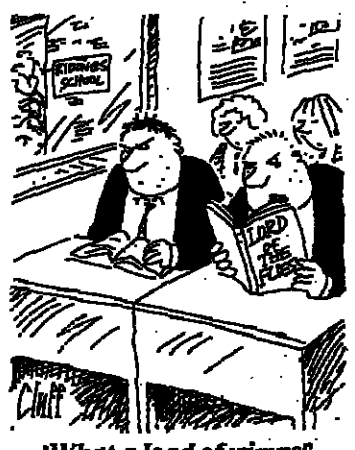
Bitter ale

BEER-drinking republicans are toasting Diana, Princess of Wales's successful visit to Australia with a brew called Royal Divorce. It's a two-bottle affair, one featuring a jug-eared Prince of Wales on the label, the other with Diana gazing wistfully at him.

The bottles of "embittered ale", all but sold out and produced by Buffy's Brewery near Diss in Norfolk, are said to pack a punch and

taste "throaty" — whatever that may mean. Competition on this beery, celebrity theme comes from the Great Stout brewery in Canterbury, which has produced beer bottles in a three-pack featuring our political leaders: John's Judicious Juice, Tony's Trustworthy Tipples and Paddy's Proportional Pint. The taste, one may assume, is pretty bland.

● The fun has stopped in Maidstone prison for Reggie Kray, gangland killer and murderer of Jack "The Hat" McVitie. After adopting



"What a load of wimps"

the name "Crazy Horse", and building up a collection of American Indian memorabilia, he was spotted wearing an Indian head-dress in the prison corridors. This was too much, and the authorities have confiscated, for safe-keeping, his bone breastplates, peacepipes and remaining paraphernalia.

Major draw

An auction of celebrity doodles conducted by Lord Archer on Thursday night to raise money for UNICEF bore little correlation with the opinion polls or, indeed, artistic merit. Paddy Ashdown's drawing went for £125. Tony Blair's Baldr's for £250. And John Major's, a fine line drawing of Humpty the Downing Street Cat on the steps of Number 10, sold for £600.

Hot news

HAPPY royal news comes from Lady Helen Windsor and her husband, the art dealer Tim Taylor. Taylor is opening his own gallery in a new house in Bruton Place, London. Since leaving Leslie Waddington 15 months ago he has operated as a private dealer; now he wants his own shop. Taylor's move



Taylor-made couple

comes after a profitable year in which he has traded in works by Picasso, Leger, Francis Bacon and Howard Hodgkin — many of them in the £300,000 range.

To complete the improbably perfect picture of professional and family bliss, Lady Helen will be supervising an exhibition programme which will be launched next spring. The Duchess of York may care to take notes.

P.H.S



AFRICA'S BLACK HOLE

Cruelty, kleptocracy and 'affirmative shopping'

Zaire and its wretched African neighbours are all but at war, confronting the world not only with another human disaster but with the prospect that Zaire, the second largest country in black Africa, may finally disintegrate. The proximate cause is yet another outbreak of ethnic persecution of the Tutsi peoples scattered all over the African Great Lakes region. The deeper cause is three decades of corrupt despotism and chronic misadministration in Zaire, a land which has dived with anarchy ever since its first days of independence in 1960. Roughly but respectfully translated, the grandiose name chosen by President Mobutu Sese Seko Kuku Ngbendu Wa Za Banga means the all-conquering-who-leaves-fire-in-his-wake. Having looted Zaire for 31 years, he is now far away in Lausanne, probably dying. He has cronies, mainly in the military, but by deliberate design he has no successor.

The Banyarwanda Tutsi inhabiting the hills along Zaire's borders with Rwanda and Burundi have been treated almost as rebels since 1981, when they were deprived of Zairean citizenship. That is what they have finally decided themselves to be, taking up arms in response to a disgraceful Zairean ultimatum to them to choose between death and expulsion. They are routing the rabble that passes for the Zairean army, along with the Rwandan Hutu militias in exile who joined the pogrom. Nearly a million mainly Hutu Rwandan refugees have fled in panic, many of them deeper into Zaire and the thick of a brutal succession struggle.

The West should resist the temptation to blame itself. Certainly, colonial frontiers were drawn that took no account of ethnicity. But this is hindsight made deceptively simple; Zaire contains some 300 ethnic groups, so just where should lines have been drawn? Closer to the mark is the bleak prospectus set out 35 years ago by a young Algerian radical, Frantz Fanon, in *The Wretched of the Earth*.

The book became the bible of Westerners consumed by post-colonial guilt. But far more people read the preface by Jean-Paul Sartre, decrying Western culture as "a tissue of lies" and an excuse for colonial pillage,

than Fanon's own prophecy for his fellow-Africans. He foresaw the betrayal of their dreams at independence by a new kleptocratic elite. The fathers of independence, he predicted, would fill their pockets and those of their cronies, becoming presidents not so much of their country as of a "company of profiteers" out to milk it dry. So thoroughly did first-generation African rulers prove Fanon right that it is only now that younger men are reversing their malignant legacy.

President Mobutu, who has been at the job for 31 years, looted his huge and hugely rich country more systematically than most. Gambling successfully that Cold War concerns would shield him from Western sanctions, he seized 1,500 businesses in the name of *authenticité* and let his cronies bankrupt them. He left 90 per cent of the few roads that the Belgians built to revert to jungle. Zaire today is as lawless as it is destitute. Looting, particularly by the military, is so much a way of life that the locals call it "affirmative shopping". Inflation is 7,000 per cent, foreign reserves (discounting the President's vast foreign bank accounts) are exhausted. Survival is mainly by subsistence. Kinshasa is held in angry contempt.

It may be that salvation for this vast land may eventually lie in the autonomy which Shaba (ex-Katanga, the source of the trouble in 1960) and diamond-rich Kasai already exercise *de facto* and which the Tutsi rebels in the east are grabbing by armed force. But getting rid of dictators can be even riskier than living under them. For fear of worse, even the President's foes are praying that he lives long enough to broker a transition.

Meantime, Zaire is a black hole in the heart of Africa, capable of sucking the chronically unstable countries on its borders into the death-agony of its succession struggle. Rwandan troops entered the Zairean town of Goma yesterday. To limit human suffering, the West must find better ways than those it tried after the 1994 Rwandan genocide. First it must try to prevent a regional war. Time is short, the chances slim. Fear of catching the Zaire disease may be the only thing that diplomacy can play upon. In Africa's hate-consuming heart, it is not much of a lever.

FREEDOM AND ORDER

Howard is right to resist a blanket ban on handguns

Simple solutions can often be the best. A ban on all handguns has not only the merit of clarity but the support of the police rank and file, of the Opposition parties outside Ulster and of those most powerfully affected by the Dunblane killings. A blanket ban would certainly be easier to enforce than any exemptions. Nevertheless, the Government is right, for practical and principled reasons, to resist the pressure for prohibition.

Few politicians have made the protection of the public as salient a priority as Michael Howard. But the Home Secretary has recognised that the Government has to balance providing security for citizens with permitting a legitimate sporting activity to continue. Mr Howard's Firearms Bill demonstrates a commitment to protection first. It will, if passed, give Britain some of the tightest restrictions on gun ownership in the world. But it will also allow genuine enthusiasts, under stringent conditions, to continue with their traditional sport.

The Bill would ban all handguns above .22 calibre, insist even they were stored in clubs and make the acquisition of a firearms licence far more difficult. Guns of that calibre are used by the serious sportsmen who compete in the Olympics. Such weapons can certainly kill, but they do not exercise the same fascination for the inadequate as more powerful weapons.

Like shotguns and stalking rifles, the .22 calibre pistol is primarily used by those whose interest is in enjoying sport on

traditional lines, not flourishing ugly artillery. No store can ever be secure enough to ensure a gun does not go astray but the Bill specifies strict conditions for clubs which should minimise the risk. If an individual wishes to take a gun from a club to shoot in a competition it will have to be carried by a third party licensed by the police for that purpose. A determined individual could find a way round the restrictions, but anyone intent on acquiring a weapon and prepared to break the law can already find themselves a gun in most cities with an organised criminal presence. If the Bill were enacted, gun clubs would be only the last resort for criminals who wanted a firearm.

Some advocates of shooters' rights have opposed an absolute ban on the basis that prohibition would drive legitimate sportsmen underground. It is a poor commentary on the peaceable souls the gun lobby claim to speak for that they would break the law if denied their sport. If shooters really are that irresponsible, then that seems an argument in favour of denying them any weaponry, not indulging them. Shooters should be allowed to continue their activities in controlled conditions not because the State fears their defiance but because it wishes to maximise freedom consistent with order. Mr Howard has been caricatured in the past as a thoughtless populist. His approach to the Firearms Bill demonstrates a willingness to balance liberty and coercion, public pressure and policy detail.

HOOKE'S REMINDER

A great Anglican thinker speaks to this century

This weekend marks a pause for breath in the public debate over morality and the anniversary of the death of the 16th-century Anglican, Richard Hooker: it is an appropriate coincidence. Hooker has faded a little from public view, but his work has something to say to Britain's debate with itself over moral standards. Hooker stood up, throughout his life and most trenchantly in *The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, for the importance of moral reasoning when it was under threat from the emotional certainties of Puritan theology. Moral thought seems to require defenders in every age.

When Hooker was alive, the established Catholic Church suffered from decayed spiritual authority. The old social structure built by medieval feudalism was still dissolving and social bonds were weakening. The most powerful trends of the day worked against reasoning in religion. The Catholic Church relied on the authority of the institution and its past. Puritans proclaimed the Bible's revealed truth and the importance of faith which relied neither on the institution nor on the State. Many of those disputes are long since dead but the mood of Hooker's time echoes in today's troubled society. His overall approach, rather than his detailed arguments on the controversies of his own day, speaks to today.

Hooker fashioned one of the planks of Anglicanism from a creative compromise which was instantly and predictably attacked for its failure to be uncompromising,

He wanted to reconcile the demands of divine law and the State, and he sought to rest belief on a three-cornered foundation: scripture, faith and reason. Even Christ used to argue, Hooker wrote: "there is as yet no way known how to dispute or to determine of things disputed without the use of natural reason". Far from being a split-the-difference middle way, this is — or should be — the most exhilarating challenge to politicians and commentators trying to fashion new codes, rules and frameworks.

Moral behaviour involves an element of choice. Several routes to the right choice exist, but neither blind faith nor blind obedience have much force in today's world. What was so distinctive about the manifesto launched by Frances Lawrence was that her arguments were not merely a cry from the heart. She issued an invitation to reason, solutions, to rethink standards of behaviour and to persuade. What we may believe or feel matters, but what we know matters too.

The quality of public argument and debate is important in itself. It is nonsensical to tell churchmen to "stay out of politics", since politics involves moral choices. By the same token, poor political arguments from the clergy deserve hard-headed criticism like bad political reasoning from anybody else. Today's moral campaigners should try to earn the tribute paid by Pope Clement VIII, who said of Hooker's work: "It has such seeds of eternity that it will abide until the last fire shall consume all learning."

Critical thinking and moral values

From the Headmaster of Wolverhampton Grammar School and others

Sir, The present concern with moral regeneration raises several issues for us who teach in that area. We are already working to produce critical thinking. This is perceived in some quarters as a challenge to morality: in fact it is only a challenge to an authoritarian view of morality. Despite the tenor of the current debate, an authoritarian or rule-based morality is not the only legitimate moral approach.

From our experience, many schools maintain a proper and sensible balance in educating children in critical thinking and moral values. These are not topics which may be taught, but skills which must be developed. We cannot agree that there is a body of knowledge called "morality" which can be taught.

In the case of this school, a Philosophy for Children programme is being successfully implemented in which moral awareness and critical thinking are developed through being practised and enjoyed. To see a group of 11-year-old boys and girls engaged in moral and ethical debate is an experience which those who see schools as moral wastelands would do well to enjoy.

Yours faithfully,
BERNARD TRAFFORD
(Headmaster)
D. BARLOW,
PETER WHALE
(Head and Deputy Head,
Theology and Philosophy Department),
Wolverhampton Grammar School,
Compton Road,
Wolverhampton, West Midlands.
October 31.

From Mr William Marshall

Sir, If children have to be taught that it is wrong to deprive others of their possessions, that it is wrong to cause pain and misery and suffering and that without authority and leadership all is chaos, then no amount of moralising or tuition in values will have the slightest effect on our deplorable society (letters, November 1).

Yours,
W. MARSHALL,
41 The Drive, Chingford, E4
November 1.

From Mrs Pamela Strachan

Sir, In the current clamour for a re-kindled moral awareness in the young it might be worth noting that the centenary of C. S. Lewis's birth will occur in 1998.

A celebration of the professor would seem appropriate. Perhaps the Narnia stories should be core curriculum material. I know the figure of Aslan made a more powerful impact on my agnostic offspring than anything offered by the Christian Church, best endeavours notwithstanding.

Yours faithfully,
PAMELA STRACHAN,
5 Winton Drive, Glasgow.
November 1.

From Mr Richard Thomas

Sir, The past 30 years have witnessed a seemingly endless drive towards the establishment of extensive rights and freedoms for the individual, largely at the expense of society.

Pressures in society 40 years ago served to encourage, if not coerce, the individual to behave in what might be termed a socially acceptable fashion. It is clear that the pendulum that moves between the individual and society in respect of rights and duties has moved much too far in favour of the former.

Anyone who believes that this imbalance can be corrected by well-meaning talk of moral crusades and changes to the national curriculum is misguided. What is needed is a total change whereby individual duties and responsibilities are given priority over rights and freedoms.

Yours faithfully,
R. THOMAS,
99 Bishopswood, Brackla,
Bridgend, Mid Glamorgan.
November 1.

From Mr J. P. Hopewell

Sir, Congratulations on an outstanding editorial — "Virtue must be taught" (October 29). This is the convincing voice of reason.

My warm thanks,
JOHN HOPWELL,
The Old Vicarage,
Langrish,
Petersfield, Hampshire.
October 29.

From Mr Patrick O'Brien

Sir, Any statement defining morality which does not differentiate between the nuclear family — which as a rule supports itself as well as paying taxes to support single parents, one of whom is not fulfilling their social duty to support their children — can only be a politically-correct farce.

Yours truly,
PATRICK O'BRIEN,
2 Evening Glade,
Farnham, Dorset.
November 1.

Letters for publication should carry contact telephone numbers. We regret that we cannot accept letters by telephone but they may be sent by fax to 0171-782 5046.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Disinformation on Katyn murders

From Professor Emeritus Norman Davies

Sir, Having attended and enjoyed the Times-Dillon's forum marking the publication of Mikhail Gorbachev's *Memoirs* (report, later editions, October 30, leading article, October 31), I must draw your attention to a most revealing item in the memoirs relating to the history of 1940.

As Gorbachev relates (pp 480-81), he himself took the courageous decision in April 1990 to confirm publicly that it was the Soviet NKVD, not the Nazis, who had perpetrated the cold-blooded murder of about 26,000 Allied (Polish) officers in the Katyn forest and elsewhere exactly 50 years before. Yet this is an event which he does not call a crime but puts into the category of "admitting our often grievous mistakes".

Moreover, one of the accompanying plates (in the section following p354) supports the old discredited version of events that Gorbachev was eager to disown. It supposedly shows him "During my visit to Belorussia [Belarus] at the place where the small village of Katyn once stood."

The caption continues: "The Katyn massacre of prisoners of war took place near by." Well, it didn't. The picture shows Gorbachev not at Katyn, but at Khayn.

The extra letter 'h' conceals half a century of disinformation. Katyn was one of many villages in Eastern Europe to be destroyed (like Lidice) by the Germans, but the only one specially selected after the war as the site of Soviet Belorussia's grandiose "National War Memorial". Visited by millions of tourists and honoured by foreign diplomats, including our own, it served for decades to draw attention away from the totally separate location of Katyn (about which, until the era of glasnost, it was a criminal offence to talk openly).

It is an excellent illustration of the technique whereby the truth about

Hitler's crimes was consistently used to conceal Stalin's crimes.

However, it is not only in Gorbachev's *Memoirs* that confusion still reigns. It is one of the curiosities of our justice system that the British War Crimes Act of 1991 was carefully crafted so that events such as those at Katyn can be classed as criminal whilst those at Katyn cannot.

One can only conclude that our legislators are in full agreement with Gorbachev that the mass murder of 26,000 Allied officers was just a "grievous mistake".

We remember only what is convenient to remember. In that same fateful year of 1940, when Stalin was Hitler's partner, thousands of Polish servicemen who had managed to escape the fate of their comrades murdered at Katyn were lining up to give their lives for the defence of Britain.

These matters lie at the heart of the confusion surrounding one of the most urgent issues of current European politics. People at the Times-Dillon's forum may have noticed that nothing fired up Mr Gorbachev more passionately than his opposition to the proposed enlargement of Nato. He somehow contrived to make his case, even though a few minutes earlier he had been warmly commending the right of all free democratic nations to decide their future for themselves.

The prime justification for the enlargement of Nato lies in the fact that the free democratic nations of the former Soviet bloc, including those ruled by ex-Communists, have decided to press for admission. And the prime reason why they have done so lies in their familiarity with chapters of European history which most of us choose to forget.

The Katyns of Europe's past were every bit as real as the Khaytns.

Yours sincerely,
NORMAN DAVIES,
25 Thorncliffe Road, Oxford.
November 1.

Poor planning for provincial opera

From Dr Valentine U. McHardy

Sir, The "lack of choice for provincial opera-goers who want to see grand opera", bemoaned by Mr Chris Viveash (letter, October 22), does not have a simple solution.

While London-based companies may plead the expense of touring as a reason for staying at home, companies such as Welsh National Opera, Opera North and Scottish Opera are constrained by the "spheres of influence" policy promoted by the then Arts Council of Great Britain in the 1970s. Thus Scottish Opera mounted a new production of *Norma* as recently as 1993, but this could not be seen south of Newcastle.

These geographical restraints do not seem to apply to foreign companies. After their warm welcome in Bristol, Romanian National Opera arrived to give five performances in Edinburgh in the same week as Glasgow-based Scottish Opera had already arranged to put on a "week" of opera there. This had been limited by lack of funds to two evenings of the simply staged and well reviewed *Ladameo* (Arts, October 7) and a concert performance of *The Pearl Fishers*.

I attended a performance of *Aida* by Romanian National Opera and have to agree that your reviewer's comments ("Frankly pitiful", Arts, October 15) were justified. It is indeed puzzling that Romanian National Opera seems to have obtained such generous support from the Association for Business Sponsorship of the Arts

(ABSA), which acts on behalf of the Department of National Heritage, when this funding would have been better used to support British companies, whose standards of production are generally higher.

While the applause for *Norma* at Bristol underlines the demand for large-scale productions of opera outside London, the arrangements for funding and programming remain far from satisfactory.

Yours faithfully,
VALENTINE U. MCHARDY,
6 Etrick Road, Edinburgh.

From Mr Paul Tumim

Sir, Mr Chris Viveash is mistaken when he claims that the provinces have not had the chance to see *Norma* for 20 years. I had the misfortune of seeing the Welsh National Opera's production of that opera in Bristol in June 1983, and I understand that the WNO has favoured Bristol with it again since then, as recently as last year.

Although I have not seen this year's Romanian production, my memories of that dreary evening 11 years ago incline me to the view that the frequency with which the citizens of Bristol are subjected to *Norma* borders on the excessive.

Yours faithfully,
P. TUMIM,
60 Bishop's Mansions,
Bishop's Park Road, SW6.
October 22.

Medicine and law

From Mrs Jane Fortin

Sir, Who could fail to sympathise with the parents of the baby boy with a life-threatening liver defect (report, October 28, letter, October 29)? Nevertheless, the Court of Appeal's recent confirmation of their right to refuse a life-saving liver transplant is worrying.

In particular, the decision may undermine the strength of existing case law which protects desperately ill children from parents whose sincerely held opposition to medical treatment would hasten their deaths.

There may be some inconsistency in the courts continuing to override the objections of parents who are Jehovah's Witnesses to life-saving blood transfusions for their children whilst allowing others to reject the benefits of medical technology which carry a good prognosis for healthy survival.

On a more general note, can it seriously be maintained that it is in the best interests of one too young to assert a wish to live, to undergo an early and avoidable death?

Yours faithfully,
JANE FORTIN
(Senior lecturer in law,
King's College London,
School of Law, Strand, WC2.
October 30.

Gun control

From Mr A. B. Phillips

Sir, I would be happier for Parliament to have a free vote on guns (letters, October 31) if I could be assured that those voting had read Lord Cullen's report and had a valid reason as to why it should be ignored.

Yours faithfully,
ALAN PHILLIPS,
35 Garway Road, W2.

Will it be clear today?

From Mr John Ainley

Sir, Try as I might, when determined to hear the radio weather forecast, why do I finish up saying to my wife, "What did they say?"

Nothing wrong with their diction, it's my concentration that lapses. Surely I am not alone?

A plea to the forecasters: How about the odd interpolation, "Now pay attention" or "Are you listening?" would work wonders.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN AINLEY,
4 Station Road, Cranswick,
Driffield, East Yorkshire.
October 31.

Can't take it with you

From Professor Peter Curwen

Sir, I received from the Halifax Building Society a circular concerning its conversion which stated that, "where a joint investing member dies, then his or her membership with the society ends".

Is one to assume from this that, having occupied every high street on Earth, the Halifax was refused planning permission to set up a branch in Heaven?

Yours sincerely,
PETER CURWEN,
Policy Research Centre,
Sheffield Business School,
Sheffield Hallam University,
City Campus, Unit 7,
Sheffield Science Park,
Sheffield, South Yorkshire.
November 1.

Recalling best of episcopal insults

From the Canon Treasurer of St Paul's Cathedral

Sir, Stories of Bishop Montgomery Campbell's frigid behaviour and sour jibes are legion (letter, October 28).

When I moved from Canterbury diocese in London in 1959 he licensed about 20 of us who were newly arrived curates, in Church House chapel. The legal formalities completed, he walked out, ignoring all of us. Not one word of welcome.

Some months later I was deputed to act if necessary as his chaplain at the institution of our new rector. He arrived with no chaplain. I presented myself, he looked at me with disfavour and said: "It appears I have no alternative."

He clearly did not like Geoffrey Fisher, who had ordained me. His most memorable insult, in my experience, was applied to Geoffrey, his Archbishop. "My employer", he announced, "is a hard man. He boils his eggs in widows' tears."

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL SAWARD,
6 Amen Court, EC4.
October 28.

From the Reverend R. P. S. Waddy

Sir, Bishop Montgomery Campbell was indeed an incomparable wit. Alas, he has no successor on the bench today (except Robert Runcie!).

But your correspondent's story of the milk of human kindness and the cow is far older than that. E. M. Sneyd-Kynnersley, in his account of his years as an HMI, attributed it to Samuel Wilberforce, Bishop of Oxford and the wit of his Victorian age, who so described a brother bishop. Ecclesiastical chestnuts always reappear in each generation, and have done so, no doubt, since the days of Ecclesiastes, that cynical retired clergyman.

A fustian devotee once said to Montgomery Campbell: "I hear that a little book of your sayings is to be published." Pained, the bishop replied: "A little book?"

Yours sincerely,
PAT STACY WADDY,
Manorhead,
Tilford Road, Hindhead, Surrey.

From Mr Geoffrey Hinton

Sir, Bishop Montgomery Campbell was following in a tradition exemplified in the Thirties by Bishop Herbert Hensley Henson of Durham. When asked by Archbishop Cosmo Gordon Lang, at Bishophorpe Palace, for his opinion of a new portrait of him, Henson trenchantly replied: "A very good likeness! Proud, pompous and prelati!"

However, I fancy that it is in the world of education that the best witty ripostes are encountered. Three years ago a student told me in class: "Mr Hinton, we're in our salad days, and you're in your vegetable days."

Yours faithfully,
GEOFFREY HINTON,
1 Northmoor Place, Oxford.
October 28.

From Canon Peter McCrory

Sir, It was a joy to be reminded of Bishop Montgomery Campbell's acerbic wit. My favourite story is of the ordination he was about to interview.

"Come in, Brown, take a chair," said Bishop Henry.

"Flenns-Brown, my Lord," corrected the young man.

"Take two chairs," came the reply. Yours sincerely,
PETER MCCRORY,
The Vicarage, 278 Kew Road,
Kew, Richmond, Surrey.
October 28.

Beyond the pain

From Dr Kenneth Swinburne

Sir, It would seem from last night's BBC2 programme on the Victoria and Albert Museum (review, October 24) that, whatever else the museum contains, it certainly holds the National Collection of Plastic Buckets.

This is both a shame and a disgrace; if we are really unable to care for priceless treasures in a proper manner we should, perhaps, send them to America.

Surely it is now time for us to repair the roof of the V&A, without any delay, and before undertaking further extensions which, on present evidence, we may be unable to maintain.

Yours sincerely,
KENNETH SWINBURNE,
16 Foxhill Crescent,
Leeds, West Yorkshire.
October 24.

Down the Tube

From Mr John Raybould

Sir, No wonder there are frequent delays and breakdowns on the Central Line, in view of the "Robert Maxwell" station on Simon Patterson's revised Underground map (report and pictures, October 29).

Shame on London Underground for not permitting the artist to display his fascinating map of the system, now contending at the Tate Gallery for the Turner Prize.

I should love to ask for a return ticket to "René Descartes" ("I commute, therefore I am").

Yours etc,
JOHN RAYBOULD,
3 Chestnut Court, High Street,
Newport, Saffron Walden, Essex.
October 29.

NEWS

Goma falls to Rwandan army

■ Goma, a strategic city in eastern Zaire, yesterday fell to the invading Rwandan army in fierce street-by-street fighting alongside Zaire's Tutsi insurgents. The fall of the city is expected to trigger a new pogrom against the Tutsi population throughout the turbulent, sprawling country. Pages 1, 15, 25

Outrage at Gascoigne selection

■ Paul Gascoigne was included in England's World Cup squad yesterday, provoking outrage among women's rights and religious groups which said he should be dropped over allegations that he beat his wife. Campaigners accused Glenn Hoddle, the England coach, of putting football before the safety of women and setting a good example to young people. Pages 1, 3, 52

Tourist centres plan

Plans to "privatise" Britain's network of 800 tourist information centres by handing them over to travel agencies are being drawn up by Labour. Page 6

Ridings pupils protest

Pupils at The Ridings School in Halifax have launched a counter-attack against those children who have forced its closure. Page 7

Hume backs celibacy

Cardinal Hume, ordaining four married men, said that celibacy remained the norm for the Roman Catholic priesthood. Page 8

Youths jailed

Two youths were jailed yesterday for kicking a teenager to death in the front garden of his family's home after he tried to stop them tormenting his father. Page 9

Gun control criticized

Government proposals for gun controls have been met with gun lobby criticism. Pages 1, 10, 23

The office Christmas party is in Paris

■ More than 100 groups from City and South East companies are planning to hold their office Christmas parties in Paris. However, taking 20 grown-ups to Paris for eight hours requires military planning so that tantrums are avoided. Page 12

Bomb suspects held

About 40 suspects are under arrest for the terrorist bombing of an American barracks in Saudi Arabia. Page 13

Lesson unlearned

Foreigners have been bloodied in Afghanistan for 2,500 years, and still they have not learnt their lesson. Page 14

Saving Venice

Should the "Save Venice" committee meeting next week continue "just to prop up monuments" or broaden their role? Page 17

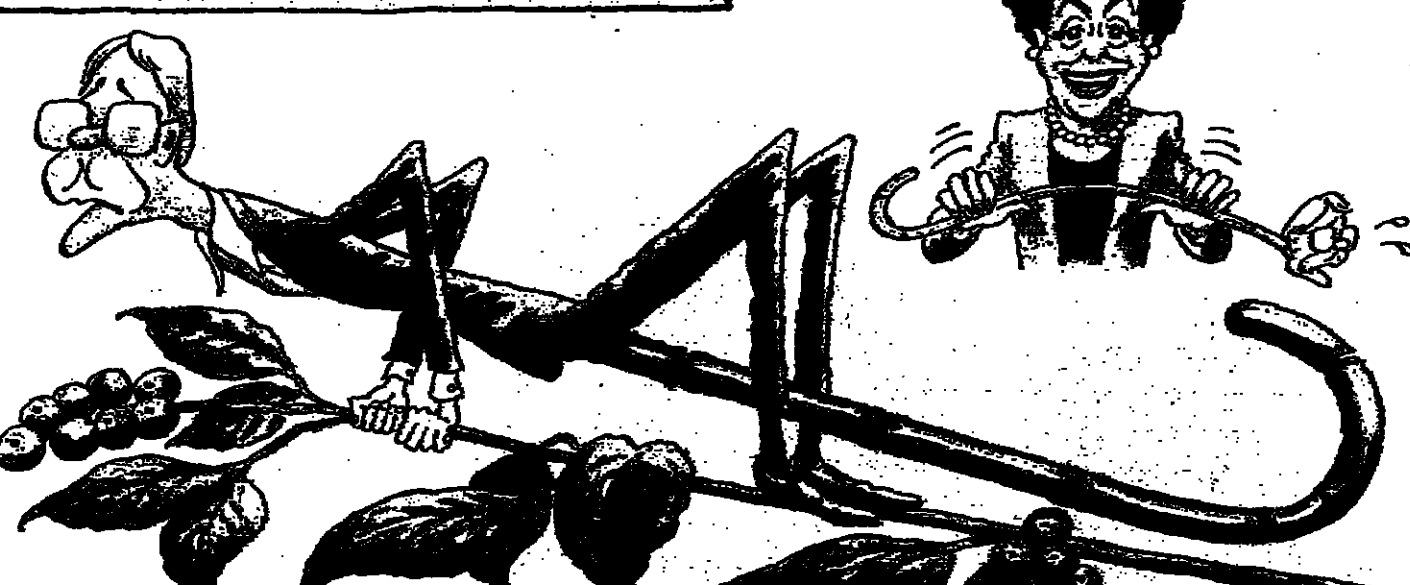
Hunters take cover

When Americans select their president, they will also vote on an array of anti-hunting motions, including elk hunting. Page 18

Clinton funds pledge

A pledge by President Clinton to reform the widely-ignored campaign finance laws has been met with much scepticism. Page 19

NATURE NOTES

Stick Insect (*Sixus of the bestus*)

As an educational aid and a source of much painful pleasure this whacky pet is hard to beat.

Alan Brooke

OPINION

Africa's black hole: Zaire and its neighbours are all but at war, confronting the world not only with another human disaster but with the prospect that the second largest country in black Africa may finally disintegrate. Page 23

LETTERS

Moral values: gun control: weather reports. Page 23

COLUMNS

Simon Jenkins: Two documents gaze up at me from my desk. Both are rules purporting to tell young people how to behave. One is this week's top of the American bestseller list. The other would be binned were it not the product of the Government's curriculum agency. Page 22

OBITUARIES

Junius Jayewardene, former President of Sri Lanka; Denis Owen, ecologist. Page 25

BUSINESS

Economy: The Treasury's independent forecasters told the Chancellor not to cut taxes in the Budget. Page 27

Python writ: The Monty Python team is suing Paragon Entertainment Corporation, a Canadian film distributor that has the rights to the *Life of Brian*, along with Channel 4 Television. Page 27

Markets: The FT-SE 100 Index fell 30.6 points to 3948.5. Sterling's trade-weighted index rose from 90.2 to 90.9 after a rise from \$1.6285 to \$1.6375 and DM2.4634 to DM2.4836. Page 30

SPORT

Football: Newcastle United have been drawn against the French club Metz in the UEFA Cup third round. Page 52

Rugby union: Five quarter-final places in the Heineken European Cup are undecided as the final round of qualifying matches begins. Page 52

Cricket: Graham Gooch is prepared to retire as a player if he is appointed chairman of selectors. Page 52

Rugby League: Great Britain suffered a 3-0 Test whitewash as New Zealand equalled their highest score against the Lions yesterday. Page 47

ARTS

Millennium blues: "A vastly expensive funfair is to be cobbled together in Greenwich," Richard Morrison writes, "because it's easier to do that for the Millennium than attempt the more useful task of putting our Humpty-Dumpty nation together again." Page 21

Selling well: with Alun Armstrong outstanding in the leading role, the National Theatre has mounted a fine new production of Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*. Page 21

SECTIONS

MAGAZINE

Glorified hitman: The Irish Republican Michael Collins is regarded as a hero by some, a fallen idol by others. Page 10

Weekend

War story: Spanish Civil War volunteers. Pages 1, 2



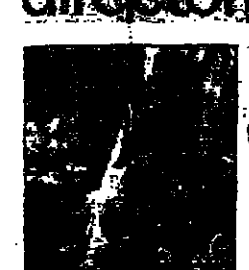
Health: flowers as an alternative therapy. Page 2

Travel: London on a shoe-string. Pages 1, 24

10 15

Win one of five Sony PlayStation 3. Meet the new face of Live & Kicking. Page 10

LITERATURE



TV, radio: Pages 23-50

Food: part 1 of fish cookery course. Pages 3-6

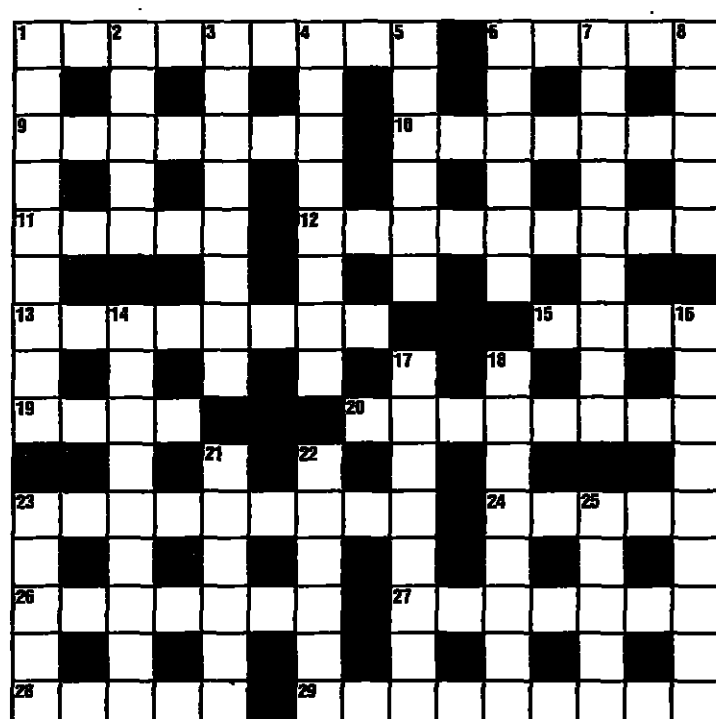
Books: Pages 7-12

Entertainment: Page 13-22

THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,315

ABERLOUR A limited edition, 1970 vintage bottle of Aberlour single malt whisky, the only malt whisky to have twice won the prestigious Gold Medal and Pot Still Trophy at the International Wine & Spirit Competition, will be given for the first five correct solutions opened next Thursday. Entries should be addressed to: The Times Saturday Crossword Competition, PO Box 186, Virginia Street, London E1 9DD. The winners and solution will be published next Saturday.

Name/Address



- ACROSS**
- Great excitement about black flower (9).
 - Died leading brave retreat in county (5).
 - Rest of old article by novelist (7).
 - Dull, low, continuous sound produced by instrument (7).
 - Plot that may be trendy? (5).
 - Greeting Asian on top of the world? (9).
 - It's not becoming a grind, if possible (5,3).
 - In fluctuating temperatures, one appears elegant (4).
 - Current supplier you're working with (4).
 - So much power in moving talk to WI (8).
 - Fatal result of backing modern forms of transport (9).
 - Girl in pool (5).
 - Garment of cloth unfashionable in normal circumstances (7).
 - Main casualty in Middle East? (4,3).
 - Noble somewhat deficient as composer (5).
 - Honour in clubs, possibly, making a game of it (9).
- DOWN**
- What makes running of course pleasant and relaxed? (4,5).
 - Girl taking in cities in France and America (5).
 - Get very excited about section of contest (8).
 - One of the fruits of battle (8).
 - Gathering in (2,4).
 - Used implement to reveal this little hollow (6).
 - Unusually soft and hairy shrub (9).
 - Bad spirit in heart of witness, appearing under protest (5).
 - Order member to gather in outlaw (5,4).
 - Charming female shortened garment (5,4).
 - Moderate policy shown by television etc. (3,5).
 - It shows how much of the work remains to be finished (8).
 - Avoid a new channel (6).
 - Possibly provides an example of this sort of word (6).
 - Thought about a practice, doctor? (5).
 - Leading characters in this opera sing *com amore* (5).

Solution to Puzzle No 20,309

INCAMERA WARMUP
NAAI ZEE
CONTEMP STATER
OUL VEE
MATHS ARITHMETIC
EET NABER
GROWING PAINS
TOU O C
ORNAMENTALLY
UD KRA SP
CORNALIA RAGER
H A U E B A A
IMPAIR WATERL
N E T M A I
GADGET SPARABLE
ORGANISER SPELL

Solution to Puzzle No 20,314

RUMIO PEPPERPO
E T E H L K E A
BOXCAMERA PATER
H E P O C E G
IDENT SCARVIN
D E D H I C
EASY STREET DOES
A E S E T D A T
NOAH PASTMASTER
R P D E M I
SLAUGHTER GOBLIN
L R P O C E G
SKIMP CAVALCADE
T N I K E V N
ORGANISER SPELL

LAST WEEK'S WINNERS: P. Holton, London; M. Morris, Richards Castle, Ludlow; M. D. Sutcliffe, Maidstone, Kent; R. Hall, Essex; York: M. E. Higgins, Maidenhead, Berkshire.

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HOURS OF DARKNESS

TODAY
Sun sets: 4:31 pm
Moon sets: 10:28 pm
12.43 pm 10.28 pm

Last quarter tomorrow

London 4:31 pm to 6:58 am
Bristol 4:41 pm to 7:08 am
Edinburgh 4:28 pm to 7:27 am
Manchester 4:32 pm to 7:12 am
Penzance 4:57 pm to 7:16 am

TOMORROW

Sun sets: 4:30 pm
Moon sets: 11:29 pm
1:14 pm 11:29 pm

Last quarter today

London 4:30 pm to 7:00 am
Bristol 4:40 pm to 7:08 am
Edinburgh 4:28 pm to 7:27 am
Manchester 4:32 pm to 7:14 am
Penzance 4:55 pm to 7:18 am

HIGH TIDES

TODAY
London Bridge 5:19
Aberdeen 5:26
Abermouth 10:44
Belfast 9:18
Cardiff 10:40
Dover 3:01
Dunbar 3:48
Dunfermline 3:48
Glasgow 4:28
Hull 4:28
Liverpool 5:19
London 5:19
Lough 5:19
Newquay 9:12
Oxford 6:38
Penzance 6:38
Plymouth 6:38
Portsmouth 6:38
Southampton 6:38
Swansea 6:38
Tees 6:38
Walsby-on-Naze 6:38

HIGHEST & LOWEST

Yesterday: Highest day temp: Poole, Dorset 18C (64F); lowest day temp: Bally Sound, Shetland 8C (46F); Highest night temp: Cape Wrath, Highland 8.8F; Highest sunrise: Hummington, Norfolk 5.9F.

FORECAST

General: northern England mostly dry and bright, but more cloudy with rain later. The rest of England and Wales will start cloudy with outbreaks of rain and drizzle, becoming brighter from the north. Scotland and Northern Ireland should have a bright morning with blustery showers in the west. Through the afternoon and evening thickening cloud will spread, rain heavy at times from the west.

London, E Anglia, E Midlands, E England, W Midlands, S Wales, N Wales, Central N: cloudy with rain and drizzle clearing from north. Wind west to southwest, fresh to strong. Max 17C (63F).

SE England, Central S England, Channel Isles, SW England: mostly cloudy with rain or drizzle, becoming persistent later. Wind west to southwest, fresh to strong. Max 16C (61F).

NW England, Lake District, Isle of Man, SW Scotland, Glasgow, Central Highlands: sunny spells and a few showers becoming cloudy with rain later. Wind west to south-west, strong. Max 14C (57F).

NE England, Borders, Edinburgh, S Wales, Aberdeen, Moray Firth: mostly dry with sunny spells, becoming cloudy later with rain in evening. Wind west to southwest, strong. Max 14C (57F).

NE Scotland, Argyll, NW Scotland, Orkney, N Ireland: sunny spells and showers becoming cloudy later with rain, heavy at times. Winds mainly west to southwest, strong to gale. Max 13C (55F).

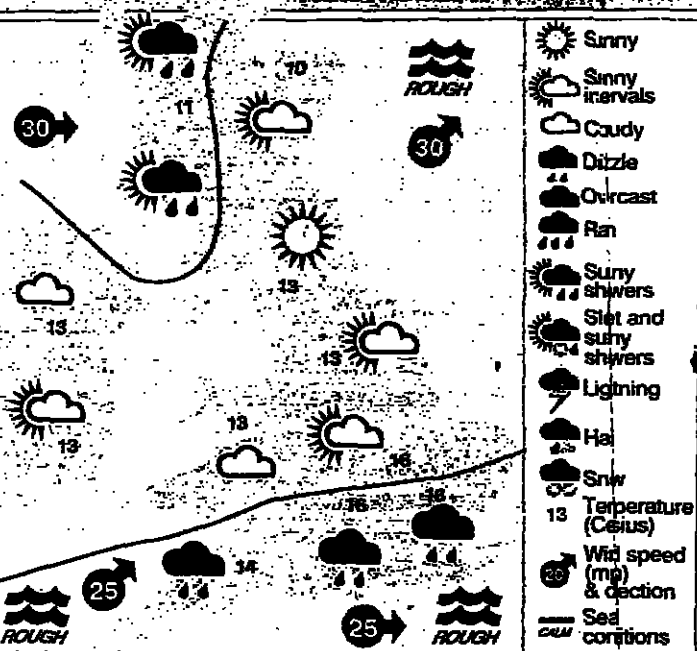
Shetland: cloudy with rain. Wind west to southwest, strong to near gale, moderating later. Max 8C (46F).

Outlook: mostly unsettled with rain, heavy at times and strong winds, locally gales.

AROUND BRITAIN YESTERDAY

24 hrs to 5 pm: b=bright, c=cloud, d=driizzle, ds=dust storm, ds=dust, f=fog, fg=fog, g=gale, h=heat, h=halt, h=halt, s=show, sh=sh,									
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NOW TODAY

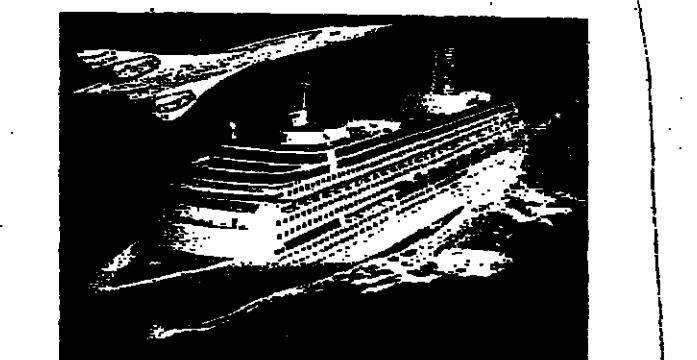


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TODAY



BUSINESS

Graham Searjeant
sees mischief
in run up to EMU
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Wednesday
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Friday

WORKING WEEK

The champagne
chef with
an eye for detail
PAGE 29



SPORT

Robinson attacks
new code with
unfettered zest
PAGES 46-52

THE HIDDEN
ASSETS
OF A DESIGN
COMPANY
PAGE 29

BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 2 1996



The sale of BrightReasons will represent a triumph for Michael Guthrie, who originally acquired the restaurants group from Grand Metropolitan

Brewer in talks to acquire Pizzaland

By Noel Fung

WHITBREAD is negotiating the purchase of BrightReasons Restaurant, the country's largest privately owned restaurant group which has a total of 180 outlets.

Whitbread is believed to have originally offered around £50 million for BrightReasons, whose chains include Bella Pasta, Pizza Piazza and Pizzaland. But the owners of BrightReasons have apparently succeeded in securing a better deal. Negotiations have entered the due diligence stage and agreement is expected to be reached by the end of the month.

BrightReasons is owned 86 per cent by Morgan Grenfell and Mercury Asset Management. The balance is held by Michael Guthrie and other founding directors. Mr Guthrie sought venture capital from Morgan Grenfell and Mercury Asset Management five years ago and bought most of the restaurant chain from Grand Metropolitan.

If the deal goes through, it will represent another success for Mr Guthrie who led the £95 million management buyout of Mecca Leisure in 1985 and took it to the stock market just ten months later. It is believed that Whitbread is more interested in the sites rather than the brands, hoping to secure the sites to roll out its existing brands which include Beefeater, TGI Fridays, Thresher and Pizza Hut, which is 50 per cent owned by PepsiCo.

Whitbread will announce its interim results on Tuesday and analysts are forecasting profits of between £168 million and £175 million, against £155.7 million in the first half of the previous year.

In August, Whitbread bought the Pelican Group, owner of the Cafe Rouge and Dome bistros, for £133 million.

WEEKEND MONEY

PERSONAL FINANCE
NEWSPAPER OF THE WEEK

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What the Budget
box could
hold for you

34-36
Alliance &
Leicester. The
bonus details

38
Are European
trusts returning
to fashion?

AWARD WINNERS



The Times Weekend Money section was this week named Personal Finance Newspaper of the Year at the Bradford & Bingley Personal Finance Media Awards, presented by Angela Knight MP, Economic Secretary (centre above), Robert Miller (right) was named Personal Finance Journalist of the year

BT and MCI in talks over possible merger

FROM RICHARD THOMSON IN NEW YORK

BRITISH Telecom and MCI Communications, America's second largest long-distance telephone company, are in talks that may lead to a merger of the two businesses, it emerged last night. Such a merger would create the world's largest international telecommunications business.

Shares of MCI were suspended at \$30 ahead of confirmation of the talks, valuing the company at \$21 billion. BT, which already owns 20 per cent of MCI, is expected to have to pay up to \$40 a share for control of the business.

Last night a spokesman for MCI said: "We have entered into negotiations with BT on a

possible 'business combination.' Talks between the two companies will continue today and tomorrow when a further announcement is likely to be made. MCI said it expected the talks to conclude this weekend, with no guarantee an agreement would be reached.

BT, which failed in an attempt to merge with Cable and Wireless earlier this year, acquired its existing MCI interest at a cost of \$4.3 billion in 1994. Under that agreement, BT could not increase its stake for ten years without MCI's agreement, which means that the new plan to buy the whole of MCI has to be ratified by the company's

board. The two companies will need official ratification of the deal from the British and US governments, and talks are understood to have been taking place in Washington and London on the issue.

Analysts said, however, that because of a reciprocity agreement between the countries, the deal could go ahead as long as both companies had equal access to each other's markets. At present, US phone companies have more access to UK markets than the other way round.

BT is using Rothschild in London and Morgan Stanley in New York as its advisers on the deal. Lazard Freres acts for MCI. BT has been trying for

several years to break into the lucrative US phone market with only limited success because of restrictive rules and the high costs of entry.

The purchase of a stake in MCI was seen as an aggressive move to establish a foothold in the market before the deregulation of the industry that took place earlier this year.

MCI's stock jumped \$5 to \$30.625 on the Nasdaq index after the CNBC television station reported that the companies were in talks. The exchange later halted trading in the stock.

MCI is almost certainly hoping to raise new capital from the deal to help it to

expand into new areas of business that have opened up to it as a result of deregulation. Long-distance phone operators such as MCI are now permitted to break into the local phone market.

In May 1995 MCI and The News Corporation, the parent company of The Times, signed a \$2.4 billion deal to create a global entertainment and information joint venture. MCI invested \$2 billion to acquire a 13.5 per cent voting stake in News Corp. BT was originally invited to participate in the joint venture, but was precluded by UK legislation that prevents it from sending broadcast signals down its phone lines.

BUSINESS TODAY

FTSE 100 3948.5 (-90.6)
Yield 3.97%
FTSE All share 1946.5 (-10.35)
Nikkei 20629.06 (-188.23)
New York 6036.57 (+1.49)
Dow Jones 704.82 (-0.35)
S&P Composite

Federal Funds 5.75% (0.75)
Long Bond 107.14 (-0.14)
Vix 6.55% (0.54%)

3-mth Interbank 0.75% (0.75)
Libor long 108.14 (108.14)
Libor 108.14 (108.14)

New York 1.6382* (1.6382)
London 1.6376 (1.6294)
DM 2.4833 (2.4841)
Sfr 2.0822 (2.0807)
Yen 186.01 (185.22)
2 Index 90.9 (90.2)

London 1.5749* (1.5185)
DM 5.1171* (5.1225)
Sfr 1.2708* (1.2680)
Yen 113.25* (114.10)
2 Index 97.0 (97.1)

Tokyo close Yen 113.67
Brent 15-day (Jan) \$22.55 (\$22.30)
Oil 1.8244
London close \$377.85 (\$378.75)
* denotes midday trading price

Output high
Manufacturing output
reached its highest level for 18
months in September.
Page 28

West Brom investors given the green light

By Robert Miller

HUNDREDS of elderly investors who were sold unsuitable home income plans will step up their campaign for compensation from the West Bromwich Building Society after a Court of Appeal ruling yesterday.

Handing down their unanimous judgement, Lord Justices Leggatt, Mummery and Swinton-Thomas gave the green light to some 300 investors to continue their action against the West Bromwich. The society provided the funding for the now banned stock market-linked bonds through the failed adviser Fisher Prew-Smith.

The judges also ruled that if the investors were successful they could keep all the money

and not have to share it with the Investors Compensation Scheme (ICS).

Richard Barnett of Barnett Sampson, the law firm representing the investors, some of whom have debts of up to £50,000, said: "We are delighted this final hurdle has been overcome. We can now concentrate on obtaining redress from the society and we expect to be in court next April."

Stephen Karle, the West Bromwich secretary, said that the plans were sold through an independent adviser and the society could not be blamed.

Anne Ashworth, page 33

Advisers warn Clarke against cut in tax

By Alasdair Murray

THE TREASURY'S panel of independent forecasters yesterday told to Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, not to cut taxes when he presents the Budget on November 26.

The majority of the panel, dubbed the six wise people, called for a tightening of fiscal policy in the Budget, arguing that the economy was already growing at a fast enough rate.

The panel also offered broad support for further rate increases, although the report was completed before Wednesday's quarter-point base rate rise and the subsequent rise in sterling.

The pound forged ahead on the foreign exchange markets

again yesterday, the trade-weighted index closing at 90.9 from an overnight level of 90.2. At one stage, sterling hit \$1.6409 against the dollar, close to a four-year high, before falling back to close at \$1.6375 and DM2.4836.

The absence of an overall consensus on the panel's report ensures that Mr Clarke's hands remain free ahead of the Budget. The City is forecasting a £2 billion tax giveaway. Of the advisory team, only Patrick Minford, Professor of Economics at Liverpool University, argued for tax cuts.

Tempus, page 30

Pythons test virtue of Paragon

By Martin Waller

BLESSED indeed are the cheesemakers, and verily, many makers of dairy products will be needed to heal the rift between the Monty Python team, the distributors of their film *Life of Brian* and Channel 4 Television.

Life of Brian, which chronicled the life of an unwilling messiah in the Holy Land 2,000 years ago and was always claimed to be based on no one in particular, has created plenty of fuss since it was made in 1978 and immediately attacked by Malcolm Muggeridge and others as blasphemous. The latest dispute is in the High Court.

The Pythons are suing Paragon Entertainment Corpora-



Life of Brian is now the subject of a High Court action

tion, a Canadian film distributor that has the rights to *Brian* and other output from George Harrison's Handmade Films. They are also naming Channel 4, with which Paragon recently struck a \$100,000, 25-

year deal allowing unlimited screenings. The idea of any scenes from *Brian*, with its full frontal nudity and singalong at the Crucifixion, joining *The Guns of Navarone* and *Genevieve*

on television every third Sunday teatime might seem alarming enough to believers, but the Pythons say their main grouse is artistic. They want to ensure their work is shown uncut, as required by the contract with Paragon.

Roger Saunders, of Python (Monty) Pictures, said that the company believed the film had been shown in a number of jurisdictions, and in a cut form. Since these include Slovenia, a deeply Catholic country, and the US, home of the Bible Belt, this seems a fair bet. He accused Paragon of a "seemingly total disregard for any of our rights in the film".

Channel 4 said it would vigorously defend the action. The film has been shown twice in Britain - uncut.

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Manufacturing output reaches 18-month high

By ALASDAIR MURRAY

FRESH evidence of the improving health of Britain's manufacturing sector emerged yesterday, with new figures showing output reaching its highest level in 18 months.

The purchasing managers' index, compiled by the Chartered Institute of Purchasing and Supply, rose to a seasonally adjusted 54.5 per cent in October, compared with 53.5 per cent in September — the

fifth consecutive monthly increase. The sector also enjoyed the first significant increase in employment since early 1995, with the employment index rising from 50.5 to 52.6.

But prices remained subdued, falling for a 12th consecutive month, suggesting that the increase in activity would have little impact on inflation in the near future.

The survey was conducted before Wednesday's rise in

base rates. Economists said yesterday that the base rate increase and the continuing appreciation in sterling were likely to dampen manufacturing output in coming months.

Jonathan Loynes, UK economist at HSBC markets, said: "The upturn is still quite modest and the strength of the pound will be doing manufacturers no favours at all — neither will the base rate hike."

The institute said that the improvement in the index was driven partly by a large increase in demand for consumer goods.

A key gauge of economic activity in America posted an eighth straight monthly increase in September, although it was the smallest gain in the string of monthly rises.

The Index of Leading Indicators, which is supposed to forecast economic trends six to nine months ahead, was barely up by 0.1 per cent after a 0.2 per cent increase in August.

House prices up again

HOUSE prices rose 0.8 per cent last month, according to the Nationwide Building Society's monthly index, and are now 7.9 per cent higher than a year ago (Caroline Merrell writes).

Philip Williamson, Nationwide's marketing and commercial director, said: "This year's trend of rising

house prices is at last being complemented by a stronger trend in house sales." However, he added, "The recovery has much further to go."

The October increase is the tenth monthly rise in succession. But the latest figures from the banks show some slowdown in mortgage advances since the summer.



Sam Chisholm, chief executive and managing director, reported significant growth in both revenue and profits

BSkyB lifts first-quarter profits 31%

BSkyB, the satellite television company, achieved a 31 per cent increase in pre-tax profits, to £66 million, in the first quarter. The total number of subscribers rose by 146,000, to 5.65 million.

Sam Chisholm, chief executive and managing director, said: "The company has performed strongly in the first quarter and has achieved sig-

nificant growth in both revenue and profits."

Operating revenues rose by 24 per cent, to £266 million, and operating profits grew by 20 per cent, to £79 million. Earnings per share rose by 30 per cent.

Subscriptions accounted for

86 per cent of revenues. Revenue from cable subscriptions grew by 49 per cent, compared

with 22 per cent growth in satellite dish subscriptions. BSkyB, which is 40 per cent owned by News International, publisher of *The Times*, said that dish sales had a slow start to the year because of coverage of events such as Euro 96 and the Olympic Games on the main terrestrial channels.

The launch of new channels, and the screening of Premier

League and Nationwide League soccer, had helped to improve subscriber levels in September, the group said.

In the first half BSkyB launched a second entertainment channel, Sky 2, and a third sports channel. Further additions, including yesterday's launch of Sky Scottish and The Computer Channel, make 40 channels available.

Clean bill of health for Salomon

By ROBERT MILLER

SALOMON BROTHERS, one of the largest independent investment banking groups, was yesterday given a clean bill of health by the Securities and Futures Authority (SFA).

In October 1995 the SFA served a notice on Salomon ordering it to report monthly after an accounting error led to a \$794 million pre-tax book-keeping loss.

At the time of imposing its measures, the watchdog said Salomon had breached rules governing its control systems, which had "failed to keep pace with the expansion and complexity of the business".

Salomon, which in 1994 incurred a pre-tax loss of \$770 million because of poor trading results and an accumulation of book-keeping errors that cost \$237 million, was ordered to present special monthly reports to the SFA.

The SFA said yesterday that based on monthly information supplied by Salomon over the past 12 months, the watchdog "is now satisfied that the changes implemented by Salomon Brothers are operating effectively, and considers that the conditions can now be satisfied".

Henderson unveils Technology trust

HENDERSON INVESTORS hopes to raise £150 million with its Technology investment trust, unveiled yesterday. The Henderson newsmen, which will be managed by Brian Ashford-Russell, will also take the opportunity to make an offer to investors in the £370 million TR Technology trust for all three classes of shares, as well as the packaged units. The split-level TR Technology trust is due to be wound up on April 30, 1998, and investors can roll-over into the Henderson Technology trust. Mr Ashford-Russell said: "Technology stocks make up 20 per cent of the world market capitalisation and offer some of the most exciting opportunities around. The potential for technology is vast."

TR investors will have the choice of continuing until 1998 with a highly geared capital structure and an investment policy of progressively increasing the liquidity in the portfolio, or maintain their exposure to the technology sector through ordinary shares and warrants in the new trust.

Ireland reduces jobless

UNEMPLOYMENT in the Republic of Ireland continued its downward trend with the biggest reduction of recent months, according to yesterday's figures from the Central Statistics Office. The seasonally adjusted figure for October was 273,800 (281,400, September) giving an unemployment rate of around 12 per cent. Prionsias de Rosca, Minister of Social Welfare, attributed the reductions to increased investment and a Government clampdown on fraudulent claims.

Matthews acquisition

BERNARD MATTHEWS, the processed meat producer, has continued its expansion into continental Europe with the £5 million acquisition of Bartsch Group, a German sausage maker. Bartsch made profits of £600,000 in 1995 on sales of £9.5 million. It is the company's first subsidiary in Germany. Bernard Matthews, which has not made any acquisitions in the past two years, said that it hoped to make more overseas acquisitions. It already owns a factory in Hungary.

Ugland in \$200m deal

UGLAND International Holdings, the shipping group, has received the go-ahead to buy the Ugland family's 50 per cent stake in Hual, a Norwegian vehicle carrier, for \$200 million. The purchase will be financed through a placing and open offer, raising £54.4 million, and new bank borrowings of £44.9 million. The seven-for-three placing priced Ugland's shares at 63p, valuing the company at £32.4 million. The family's interest in Ugland rises to 42.47 per cent (36.88 per cent).

Wolstenholme warning

SHARES in Wolstenholme Rink fell 92½p, to 78½p, after the manufacturer of printing materials said that, because of difficult trading conditions in September and October, second-half profits would fall short of expectations and were now likely to be in line with first-half profits of £3.7 million. In the previous full year, Wolstenholme earned £7.5 million before tax. The company announced the £7.2 million disposal of the resin division of Wolstenholme International, a subsidiary.

Molins buys Langen

MOLINS is doubling the size of its packaging arm with the £23.1 million acquisition of Langen, which makes case packaging machines. The deal will allow Molins to offer packaging in both boxes and bags and will take it into North America, where Langen generates most of its sales. The deal is being financed by a £2.2 million share issue and £20.9 million from reserves and borrowings. It is Molins's first acquisition since its £28 million takeover of Sandiacre last year.

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"The usual vin that didn't travel well, objets d'art and a burning desire to have our own pied à terre, that's what we brought back from France this year. Our first step was to take out a tax-free Gartmore Global PER. There is no initial charge and it was free to transfer my PEPs from previous years into their PEP. It's also free if I need to close the plan, withdraw or switch between any of the nine UK and international unit trusts (including two new ones) should stockmarket prospects or my circumstances require it."

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	Bank	Bank
	Buy	Sell
Australia \$	2.18	2.00
Austria Sch	18.43	18.53
Belgium F	64.02	63.72
Canada \$	2.289	2.128
Cyprus Cyp	0.782	0.791
Denmark Kr	10.08	9.28
Finland Mark	7.98	7.24
France F	8.78	8.11
Germany DM	2.63	2.42
Greece Dr	404	12.54
Hong Kong \$	13.24	12.54
Indonesia Rp	116	85
Italy Lit	1.08	0.97
Japan Yen	5.94	4.92
Malaysia RM	2.92	2.82
Netherlands Gld	189.30	185.20
New Zealand \$	0.625	0.570
Norway Kr	2.24	2.23
Portugal Esc	10.96	10.18
Spain Ptas	261.20	243.00
Switzerland Fr	8.20	7.40
Sweden Kr	11.29	10.39
Switzerland Fr	2.00	2.02
Turkey Lira	16.00	16.00
USA \$	1.728	1.580

THE SUNDAY TIMES

The game is called Brandicide: choose a well-known brand name and think of an incongruous product area to send it into — a Persil chocolate bar, for example. Ludicrous? Maybe, but who could have imagined that Cadbury would apply its name to a liqueur, or that Del Monte would launch a range of cook-in sauces?

Business Focus — The Sunday Times, tomorrow

من الامل

A WORKING WEEK FOR: ANTON MOSIMANN

The champagne chef with an eye for detail

Jon Ashworth meets a man whose career has catered to celebrities at all the best places

Monday
Tuesday
Wednesday
Thursday
Friday

In 1988, at the height of his fame, Anton Mosimann, head chef at The Dorchester, decided to go on his own. The years since have confirmed his place as one of the world's most prolific chefs, with two TV series, eight cookery books, and numerous awards to his name. Mosimann, the private London dining club, entertains royals and celebrities, while a party service caters for venues from the Huntington Club to Windsor Castle. A new cookery school, the Mosimann Academy, hires chefs and connoisseurs from far and wide.

Mosimann's passion is the club, located in a Victorian church building in Belgrave, an enormous chandelier suspended over immaculate tables. Champagne glasses await the arrival of the first luncheon guests, framed menus line the walls, and there is a sketch of Mosimann straddling Concorde, a steaming dish balanced in each hand.

Mosimann emerges from the kitchen, immaculate in white linen, the trademark "M" in red on his lapel. "My first love obviously has to be the club," he says. "It's my home here, in many ways. Home, such as it is, plays host to some famous names. The Prince of Wales and Diana, Princess of Wales, threw their Christmas staff party here two days after announcing their separation. Regulars include Jerry Hall, Shirley Bassey, Bruce Oldfield, and Trevor McDonald. Richard Branson fired the Rolling Stones there before signing them to his Virgin label in 1991. Membership is £500 a year with a £200 joining fee — meals excluded.

Life for Mosimann, at 49, is a whirl of celebrities and venues. The evening before, fresh back from three days filming in Switzerland for *filmmaking in Switzerland*, as it sounds in his heavy Swiss-German accent, he was cooking for the Prince of Wales at the Marlborough House. A new TV series, *Naturally Mosimann*, is due to be shown next month. Then there is the publicity tour for his latest book, *Mosimann's World*. Mosimann's "empire", such as it is, enjoys sales of more than £5 million a year.

His routine in London finds him shuttling between home in Kensington, shared with his wife, Kathrin, the school in Battersea, and Mosimann's. He runs three to five miles at least five times a week, either in Hyde Park or the health club at The Berkeley. Engagements take him to America, the Far East and Bermuda. "I'm a very lucky person, of course," he says, radiating modesty. "I enjoy what I'm doing. I get up in the morning and I feel good, I feel proud, I

feel motivated, and I can't wait to go to work. When I put my chef's jacket on I feel even better, I feel happier."

Mosimann is particularly proud of the academy — his "school" — which opened in Battersea in April. "It is a very nice way of being able to share different ideas with the public, with foodies, but also with professional people. We have chefs there from all over the world who come and take courses, seminars, and that's been very successful."

Ask Mosimann to name the famous people for whom he has cooked and he hands you a 19-page document. It lists everyone from the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh to F. W. de Klerk, Kirk Douglas, and Ronald Reagan. One of his most ambitious endeavours was cooking for 1,400 at the Duke of Edinburgh's 70th birthday celebrations in the grounds of Windsor Castle. "It was an enormously grand occasion and something to remember for life," he says.

Chefs face as pressured a job as any, but Mosimann insists that shouting and screaming is not his style. "I always like to use the carrot instead of the stick." Literally a carrot? "Maybe a glass of champagne," he laughs. "You

South of France. "I have not pushed them. I have not forced them at all. It is their own choice, their own decision."

"It just proves the point, it's exciting out there. [There are] enormous possibilities in our business today. There are very few professions I can think of where you can be creative, innovative, can be travelling the world, meet the most exciting people you can ever meet, and yet you get paid for it as well."

Mosimann was 28 when he became head chef at The Dorchester. He took charge of 132 chefs, some of whom had been working there before he was born. "It was quite a challenge coming in as a youngster, but my God, I learnt so much. Six months later, all those chefs became good friends, and I had 13 very happy, very successful years, including a second star, two stars, from the Michelin guide. There are not many chefs right now in London — head chefs — who have not been working with me at The Dorchester in those days."

He is enthusiastic in his praise of London and all things British. "I like London very much. I like the Brits very much, their attitude, their style. I love them because they appreciate good food. They've been part of a whole wave of new ideas. That's why London is now one — if not the — world city in food."

If Mosimann has a weak point, it is his obsession with everything being just so. He admits: "I'm a details person. I love details. I live with details. I get slightly nervous when I see a painting not quite being straight." His school, he says, has 300 box files, all neatly ordered. "I love organisation. I hate clutter. Don't like it."

He plans his day with the efficiency of a Swiss timepiece. Lunch and the attentions of his guests will lead to an afternoon run, followed by an early evening meeting. The next day, a Saturday, will find him at the academy, demonstrating for visitors, before cooking at the club in the evening. Sunday will find him in his office, going through his files. "I'd rather spend two or three hours on a Sunday in the office and catch up on all the paper work — most of it, anyway — than try to fit it in during the week when you're busy meeting people and being in the kitchen."

Mosimann works seven days a week and expresses horror at the suggestion that he might consider taking a holiday. "I think I would get bored after a few days." Life, he says, is about seizing the moment. "Yesterday, you can't change, it's gone," he says. "Tomorrow, we hope, we try, it's right now. And that's the way I like to live. It's right now. Make the best out of it. You never get a second chance to make a first impression."

And with that, he returned to the kitchen.



Anton Mosimann is a great believer in motivation and favours the carrot, or perhaps even champagne, approach in his relations with workers

6 You never get a second chance to make a first impression

really need those people to work with you. If the staff are not in a positive and supporting mood, it will show. I'm a great believer in motivation."

The approach harks back to his years as a trainee chef in Switzerland, when he witnessed the tantrums of chefs first-hand. "I was treated extremely badly when I was very young. I said, one day, when I'm a chef myself, I will not tolerate that at all."

His enthusiasm is infectious. Not even the rigours of long-haul travel can defeat him. "Flying for me is a joy," he says. "I enjoy the kind of peace for a few hours — with a glass of champagne or two — and I work. I constantly work. I'm a complete workaholic. You'll never see me sitting still for ten minutes without looking at a book, or looking at notes, or whatever. I carry lots of notes on the plane and I work on them while I'm travelling. But that's fun."

He flies first class — British Airways "about 95 per cent of the time" — and makes two or three trips a year on Concorde. Ask about his two sons and a glow of satisfaction creeps across his face. The elder, Philipp, 21, is at hotel school in Lausanne. Mark, 19, is working in a kitchen in the

Derbyshire gem of a design guru

David Mellor has established himself as a design guru of kitchenware, with a shop in London's Sloane Square and a rapidly growing mail order business. But he has also moved into another area, collaborating with Michael Hopkins and Partners, the firm of architects, to build a factory in Derbyshire for his cutlery-making arm.

The five-acre factory site is in the middle of the Peak District National Park, an area of outstanding natural beauty. Hallowed ground to conservationists you might think, and certainly not the sort of place some would offer up for a new range of belching smokestacks.

However, it should be pointed out that the factory occupies a site, previously taken up by a British Gas tank 106 ft in diameter. The building, of natural stone, is a fine example of Michael Hopkins and Partners' eye for fitting into context. Since completion in 1990

the building has won a host of awards, including the RIBA National Award, the Royal Fine Art Commission/Sunday Times "Building of the Year" award, the Council for the Preservation of Rural England award, and the BBC Design Award.

The factory combines traditional materials with modern structural techniques. Natural stone and steel form the perimeter shell and from



The stone building has won a host of awards

this rim, the giant bicycle-wheeled structure of the roof rises in double layers of Finnish pine plywood towards the central hub. The external look is that of a igloo-shaped shepherd's hut, a subtle, low-level building that sits well in the unspoilt surroundings. Inside is a fascinating, small-scale, old-fashioned factory producing

high-quality, hand-turned cutlery.

Cutlery has been at the core of the Mellor business from the start. Mellor trained as a silversmith at Sheffield College of Art and the Royal College of Art. In 1954, at the age of 24, he set up a silversmithing workshop in Sheffield and quickly established a reputation sufficient to win commissions to design and make

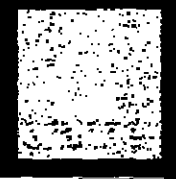
silver, for, among others, the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths and the Cutlers' Company.

In 1969 he opened his first London shop in Sloane Square specialising in cutlery and a small professional range of kitchen and tableware. Then, in the early Seventies, Mellor embarked on the restoration of Broom Hall, an historic building in Sheffield. His design for setting up workshops for specialist cutlery production there won an Architectural Heritage Year Award.

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STOCK MARKET

MICHAEL CLARK

Volatile Wall Street adds to worries in London

EQUITIES and gilts ended a turbulent week with further heavy losses as investors continued to reflect on the Chancellor's decision to raise interest rates for the first time in two years before the Budget.

Government securities were left nursing falls of almost 1% as share prices attempted to find a new support level. But early volatility on Wall Street, in the wake of the latest US non-farm payroll numbers, only served to undermine confidence. Investors appeared reluctant to open fresh positions before next week's US presidential election.

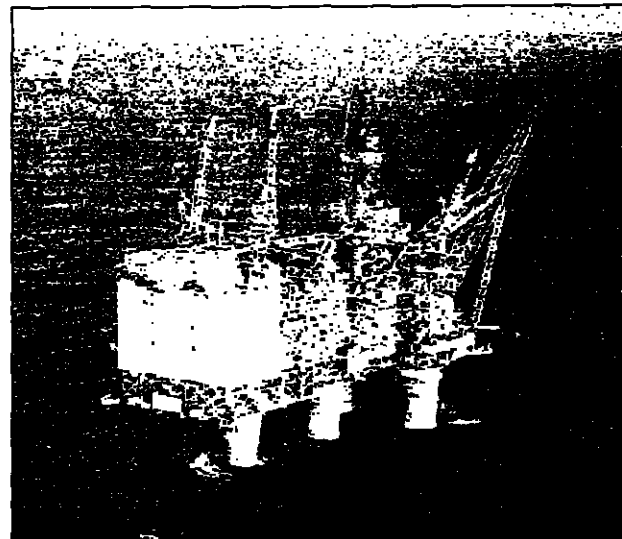
In the event, the FT-SE 100 index finished 30.6 down at 3,948.5 in thin trading that saw volume reach 609 million shares. It stretches the fall on the week for the index to 73.9.

Leading companies were marked lower as they faced up to the prospect posed by a stronger pound. Among the fallers were ICI, 4p to 775p, GKN, 7p to 411.5p, Reuters, 11p to 753.5p, and BTR, 5 1/2p to 285p. Building shares were also knocked for six as the pound gained ground against the mark. Those companies with interests in Germany include RMC Group, down 9p to 10.76p, Redland, 3p to 41p, and Blue Circle Industries, 4 1/2p to 39 1/2p.

The biggest falls were seen in oils as the price of crude tumbled easier on world markets edging down towards the \$22 a barrel level. Shell fell a further 2 1/2p to 980p, in response to Thursday's disappointing third-quarter figures. Next week is the turn of BP, 15p lower at 640p. Brokers fear it may be a repeat performance with further margin erosion in downstream activities. Analysts are also worried about the disparity between prices of North Sea and Alaskan oil. Other oil stocks to lose ground included Enterprise, 10p to 540p, Lasso, 7p to 207p, and Tullow Oil, 2p to 84 1/2p.

Continuing worries about litigation relating to tobacco-related diseases in the US left BAT Industries down 5p to a new low for the year of 420p. A total of 11 million shares changed hands.

Better than expected first-quarter figures from BSKYB failed to cut much ice with the City, leaving the shares 10 1/2p lower at 506p. Last week, the price came within a whisker of 57. But it later suffered a relapse on regulatory worries and news that The News



The biggest price falls were seen among the oil shares

Corporation, parent company of *The Times*, was putting up its 40 per cent stake, held via News International, as collateral for an issue of £1.25 billion. Yesterday's figures showed pre-tax profits at BSKYB up 31 per cent at £66 million.

BSKYB plans to invest heavily in digital television over the next few years. That should be

back of some positive comments. UBS, the broker, has been telling clients that PowerGen, up a further 9p to 510p, has been oversold on regulatory worries and should be bought. It has targeted a price of 730p and points out the rating is 30 per cent cheaper than rival National Power, 2p easier at 405p on profit-taking. PowerGen is

Associated British Foods fell 5p to 417p as NatWest Securities, the broker, urged clients to reduce their holdings ahead of full-year figures on Monday. Profits are expected to grow from £375 million to £418 million, but NatWest says that unless figures are materially ahead of expectations, they are likely to prompt profit-taking.

good news for the likes of Pace Microsystems, which makes the decoders for digital television systems. The shares responded with a rise of 5 1/2p to 234p.

Whitbread, which reports interim figures next week, rose 1 1/2p to 733 1/2p. The group yesterday announced it is in talks with BrightReasons Restaurants about the sale of its pizza and pasta chains.

The power generators continued to gain ground on the

also said to have been talking to American institutional investors allaying fears about a Labour Government imposing a windfall tax.

National Grid slipped 3p to 178p before figures next week, the first since the regulator imposed his tough new price controls. Brokers are forecasting an increase in pre-tax profits from £278.9 million to £304 million.

A stock overhang left John-

son Matthey, the precious

MOVERS OF THE WEEK

Current Price	Week's Change	Comments
Wolstenholme Rink	+785p	Profits warning
Northern Telecom	+631p	CE Electric bids
Grampian TV	+320p	40% Rumours Scottish TV set to bid
British Telecom	+222p	7p Deutsche Morgan Grenfell note stable
BAT Industries	+420p	Figures litigation worries
Havellock Europe	+291p	Profits warning
Wellman	+31 1/2p	Profits warning
Eadie Holdings	+12 1/2p	Profits warning
Lorion	+146p	15p bid hopes fade as Bank calls stable

COMMODITIES

Commodity	Price	Change
Dec 96	104.00	+0.02
Jan 97	104.00	+0.02
Mar 97	104.00	+0.02
May 97	104.00	+0.02
Jul 97	104.00	+0.02
Sep 97	104.00	+0.02
Nov 97	104.00	+0.02
Dec 97	104.00	+0.02

ROBUSTA COFFEE

Commodity	Price	Change
Dec 96	104.00	+0.02
Jan 97	104.00	+0.02
Mar 97	104.00	+0.02
May 97	104.00	+0.02
Jul 97	104.00	+0.02
Sep 97	104.00	+0.02
Nov 97	104.00	+0.02
Dec 97	104.00	+0.02

WHITE SUGAR

Commodity	Price	Change
Dec 96	104.00	+0.02
Jan 97	104.00	+0.02
Mar 97	104.00	+0.02
May 97	104.00	+0.02
Jul 97	104.00	+0.02
Sep 97	104.00	+0.02
Nov 97	104.00	+0.02
Dec 97	104.00	+0.02

MEAT & LIVESTOCK COMMODITIES

Commodity	Price	Change
Dec 96	104.00	+0.02
Jan 97	104.00	+0.02
Mar 97	104.00	+0.02
May 97	104.00	+0.02
Jul 97	104.00	+0.02
Sep 97	104.00	+0.02
Nov 97	104.00	+0.02
Dec 97	104.00	+0.02

LIFE OPTIONS

Commodity	Price	Change
Dec 96	104.00	+0.02
Jan 97	104.00	+0.02
Mar 97	104.00	+0.02
May 97	104.00	+0.02
Jul 97	104.00	+0.02
Sep 97	104.00	+0.02
Nov 97	104.00	+0.02
Dec 97	104.00	+0.02

FINANCE INDEX

Commodity	Price	Change
Dec 96	104.00	+0.02
Jan 97	104.00	+0.02
Mar 97	104.00	+0.02
May 97	104.00	+0.02
Jul 97	104.00	+0.02
Sep 97	104.00	+0.02
Nov 97	104.00	+0.02
Dec 97	104.00	+0.02

metals group, 13 1/2p lower at 595p.

A profits warning saw Wolstenholme Rink tumble 92 1/2p to 785p. The improved trading condition seen during the summer had failed to be maintained.

Shares of Kemnare Resources were briefly suspended before publication of the interim figures showing losses increasing from £26.252 to almost a million pounds. BHP has taken operational control of the Congolese Mineral Sands joint venture. The shares were later re-quoted and ended the session unchanged at 29 1/2p.

Macro 4, the computer software specialist, held steady at 495p, in spite of announcing plans to arrange a share buy-back in order to enhance earnings. The group has shareholder approval to buy up to one million shares, or 5 per cent of the issued share capital.

Chemex International was steady at 73p after warning that full-year profits would fall short of last time. Early estimates suggested a final figure of £165,000, compared with £227,000.

A marginal increase in first-half profits at Burtonwood Brewery failed to impress brokers and left the shares 2 1/2p easier at 180p. But UDO Holdings, the office equipment group, lost 7p at 190p after reporting unchanged pre-tax profits of £6.5 million.

GILT-EDGED: Investors gave a cautious welcome to the latest US non-farm payroll numbers. Even so, bonds in London failed to hold onto an early lead. They turned easier along with German bunds after reports that a large seller of five-year issues was doing the rounds.

Brokers in London reported selling of eight-year-old issues, and above, with losses of about £2 at the close.

In the futures pit, the December series of the Long Grid finished £1/32 lower at £108 1/32 as the total number of contracts completed reached 116,000.

NEW YORK: US stocks were near unchanged in heavy midday trading as the morning's gyrations gave way to more mundane Friday dealings after fresh economic reports reaffirmed a slowing economy with scant inflationary pressures. The Dow Jones industrial average stood at 6,030.87, down 1.49 points.

MAJOR INDICES

Index	Value	Change
New York (midday)	6030.87	-1.49
Dow Jones	6030.87	-1.49
S&P Composite	704.32	-0.50
Tokyo	20833.06	+166.20
Nikkei Average	12529.27	+51.71
Hong Kong	12529.27	+51.71
Amsterdam	561.31	+4.29
BOE Index	174.75	+0.00
Sydney	2139.4	+10.8
Frankfurt	2061.25	+24.00
DAX	2061.25	+24.00
Singapore	2061.25	+24.00
Stella	2061.25	+24.00
Brussels	989.60	+4.43
General	989.60	+4.43
Paris	2140.51	+15.75
CAC-40	2140.51	+15.75
Zurich	1261.98	+5.12
SKA Gen	1261.98	+5.12

Index	Value	Change
London	3948.5	-30.6
FT 100	3948.5	-30.6
FTSE Mid 250	4428.2	+6.7
FTSE 250	1971.4	+1.3
FTSE Europe 100	1747.5	+0.00
FTSE All-Share	1446.59	+10.39
FT Non Financials	2038.74	+12.64
FT Financials	1153.2	+0.03
FT Govt Secs	93.6	+1.23
Bulgaria	364.25	
SEAQ Volume	669.0m	
USM (Datastream)	204.01	+0.88
US\$	1.6375	+0.0003
German Mark	2.4836	+0.0002
Exchange Index	90.9	+0.7
Bank of England official close (Mps)	1.258	
LSOE	1.258	
RPI	153.8 Sep (2.1%) Jan 1987=100	
RPIX	153.6 Sep (2.0%) Jan 1987=100	

RECENT ISSUES

Company	Price	Change
Beechcroft	161 1/2	
Charles Taylor	161 1/2	
Corp Exec Search (3)	4	
Deep Sea Leisure	162 1/2	+5
Elect Retail Sys	177 1/2	+7 1/2
Fitness First	90 1/2	
Geo Interactive (100)	91 1/2	-10
Harstone Res Cum	121	
Healthcare Reform	99 1/2	
Interoute Tele	164 1/2	
Jardiner Interiors	125	
John David Sports	302	+3 1/2
Lotus Road (72)	75	
Lomond Under	130	
Mars Group	11 1/2	
Mondax (75)	91 1/2	+1
Oriental Returns	206 1/2	+1
Thistle Hotels (170)	165	-2 1/2
Ultra Electronics	294 1/2	-1

RIGHTS ISSUES

Company	Price	Change
Brooke Ind n/p (125)	5 1/2	
Calm Energy n/p (360)	2	
Capital Ind n/p (175)	12 1/2	
Celsia Ind n/p (100)	1 1/2	
Clyde Blyth n/p (265)	20	+1
Europ Leis n/p (145)	19 1/2	
Perkins Foods n/p (74)	8	
Prism Rail n/p (240)	120	

MAJOR CHANGES

Company	Price	Change
RISER	182 1/2	+18p
Europac	178 1/2	+13p
Flying Fish Units	178 1/2	+13p
Cohen (A)	475p	+10p
Electrocomp	421 1/2	+8p
Sentry Farm	200p	+7 1/2p
Havellock Euro	291 1/2	+7 1/2p
Adkins WS	397 1/2	+7 1/2p
Geopros Group	300p	+8 1/2p
FALLS	594p	-18p
Pizzapress	503 1/2	-12p
Johnson Math	595p	-13 1/2p
Blick	375p	-7 1/2p
ICI	775p	-14p
Realtors	763 1/2	-11p
BAT	420p	-5p
Williams Hdg	350p	-7p
Grampian	320 1/2	-7p
Watson Philip	381p	-11 1/2p

Closing Prices Page 45

TEMPUS

The steel in sterling

NOT content with the fraud-detecting metal strip in our bank notes, the Chancellor and the Governor of the Bank of England this week inserted a rolled steel joist into the currency. Already propped up with the highest short-term deposits available almost anywhere, currency speculators could not believe their good luck at the hike in the base rate and immediately began parking their spare cash in sterling accounts.

The Chancellor and the Governor believe the pound needs structural reinforcement - inflation is coming, they warn darkly. Like graduate civil engineers, they fed the need to overbuild and reinforce. Besides, steel is cheap and British steel is strongest. Indeed, they spared a thought for the manufacturer. British Steel needs to sell its product abroad, particularly in Europe, where German and French people also make cheap steel. Will they still want to buy good British steel if it costs 11 per cent more?

The share price of British Steel, which fell again today, suggests that the market believes

they will not. About a quarter of the company's sales are denominated in Deutschmarks - some £3 billion - and the City is worried about a potential £250 million hit. Chemicals manufacturers are also likely victims. About one fifth of ICI's exports are priced in the German currency and in the developing world the company is selling a dollar-denominated product. Britain's oil companies too are selling a dollar commodity. Motor vehicle assemblers, who have flocked to Britain, attracted by their input costs (labour, energy, steel) increasing in relation to the price the cars fetch on the Continent.

Among the FTSE-100 companies, more than half of their sales are made outside the UK. For many with factories abroad, the problem is in translating dollar or Deutschmark earnings into sterling but for those who use British labour in British factories, there is a competitiveness problem. If the pound strengthens further, expect trouble.

GEC/BAE

BRITISH Aerospace has been showing a clean pair of heels to its sometime rival, GEC. The industrial and defence conglomerate has just kept pace with market average growth of about 8 per cent since the beginning of the year. Meanwhile, BAE has gained 45 per cent with a surge of optimism about defence spending.

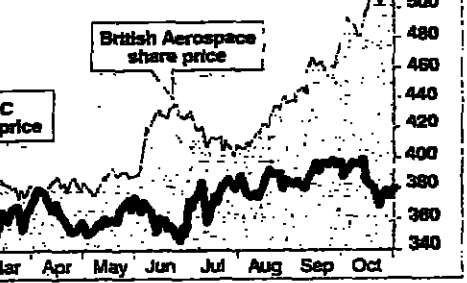
To compare the two companies is unfair on many levels. GEC is more broadly-based; a reliable, if dull, performer, tracking the index, while BAE has been a volatile, even poor investment.

Yet the two companies are locked in a political struggle over future European defence alliances. BAE's recent share price strength has much to do with the belief that it has secured an important seat at the negotiating table. A joint

DEFENSIVE POSITION

venture in missiles was secured with Matra just before Lagardere, Matra's parent won control of Thomson-CSF, thereby excluding GEC which backed a rival bid from Alcatel.

A disappointment for GEC's new chief executive but this is not the end of the story. A European defence combine without GEC-Mar-



UniChem/Lloyds

UNICHEM's directors are getting a little nervous about the company's share price. The anxiety is understandable. The value of its mixed share-and-cash bid for Lloyds Chemists is a function of the UniChem share price.

Two weeks ago, when UniChem launched its second bid for the pharmacy group, the offer was worth 505p, including 93p of cash. Yesterday Lloyds Chemists shareholders were looking at an offer worth only 495p, compared with a market price of 515p.

For a bidder to suffer a sagging share price in the early stages of a takeover is not unusual. Investors worry about dilution from a large share issue, but in this case the focus is not on UniChem but on Gehe, which has until

Friday to decide whether or not to make an offer.

Gehe has played it cool since the Government gave conditional approval to both bids. The German wholesaler has criticised UniChem for overpaying, pointing to moves to abolish price controls on over-the-counter (OTC) medicines.

But Gehe has every reason to look sniffy about Lloyds. Its apparent indifference has two useful effects. By suggesting UniChem is overbidding, it casts doubt on UniChem's strategy, making its shares look less attractive. Gehe also benefits because a weak UniChem share price lowers the threshold at which it can launch its own offer. Because Gehe is offering cash, investors will be indifferent to whether or not it overpays.

After so much fuss, Gehe would look silly were it to

EDITED BY CARL MORTISHED

LONDON FINANCIAL FUTURES

	Period	Open	High	Low	Sett
FTSE 100	Dec 96 --	4011.0	4012.0	3983.0	3971.0
Previous open Interest: 64247	Mar 97 --	3998.0	3999.0	3979.0	3986.0
FTSE 250	Dec 96 --	4452.0	4452.0	4452.0	4453.0
Previous open Interest: 4004	Mar 97 --				
Three Month Sterling	Dec 96 --	93.73	93.73	93.66	93.68
Previous open Interest: 49217	Mar 97 --	93.54	93.55	93.43	93.45



FEAR OF PENALTY 40

New warning
for aspiring
landlords

WEEKEND
MONEY

LOST ACCOUNT 36

What Ellen did
when Abbey shut
her N&P branch



THE PERSONAL FINANCE NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

An early peek into Kenneth's box

During his time at Number 11, Kenneth Clarke has become more famous for tinkering with taxes than abolishing them. The Budget on November 26 will be the last before a general election and the Chancellor will have to balance financial prudence with the need to woo the electorate. Some City experts are forecasting £4 billion of tax cuts while John Major hinted this week he would like to move towards a 20p basic rate of tax. Some commentators have suggested Wednesday's quarter-point rise in the base rate will give Mr Clarke scope for tax cuts. Reports by Anne Ashworth, Sara McConnell and Sarah Jones.

Experts offer
tax-cut tips

As the Budget approaches, some tax specialists admit being in a quandary. Convinced that Kenneth Clarke is much likelier to cut taxes than to raise them, they feel that they should tell clients not to act before November 26. Elspeth May, tax partner in KPMG, believes that Mr Clarke does not have higher taxes in mind, but adds that doing nothing carries a risk. She said: "Suppose the election is called for May 1, almost the latest possible date, and suppose Labour wins with a large majority. This would allow them to hold a quick Budget within weeks in which they could, if they wished, overturn any of Mr Clarke's measures from his November 1996 Budget, by backdating their own changes to April 6 1997."

However, others feel that the Chancellor, a consummate strategist, could use uncertainty over Labour's fiscal intentions to his advantage. Maurice Fitzpatrick, of Chantrey Vellaourt, said: "If Mr Clarke cuts income tax and Labour either votes against or

abstains when this proposal is put to the vote, he can turn the tables on Labour, claiming that they intend to reverse the cuts and impose higher taxes if they come to power."

Many expect Mr Clarke to tinker with capital gains tax and inheritance tax. This week, John Major reaffirmed his aim to abolish these taxes to ensure that "wealth cascades down the generations". Last year, about 90,000 people faced a capital gains tax bill. However, it seems that Mr Clarke would win more favour with voters by softening the blow of inheritance tax, which was paid by only 18,000 people, because it is seen as a tax on thrift, impeding parents' desire to pass the fruits of their labours on to their children. Last year, the inheritance tax threshold was raised from £154,000 to £200,000.

Mr Fitzpatrick predicts that the Chancellor could raise this to £300,000, excluding the vast majority of households from inheritance tax and underlining the Government's eventual wish to do away with the tax. This would cost £450 million, which could be met by doubling airport duty. Accountants point out that abolishing capital gains tax would result in widespread tax avoidance, as the rich rushed to convert income into capital gains. However, Mr Clarke could lift the annual exemption from £6,300 to £10,000, at a negligible cost of £35 million, and be seen to encourage thrift and enterprise.

Cuts to income tax seem to be a foregone conclusion, with most predicting that a cut of 1 to 2 per cent off the basic rate, now 24 per cent. A 1 per cent decrease (costing £1.3 billion) would save the average taxpayer just 50p a week, half the price of a lottery ticket. Mr Fitzpatrick

believes that the Chancellor would find a 2 per cent cut more appealing.

He said: "A 2 per cent cut would look good in the headlines. It would also bring the greatest relative benefit to those earning between £18,000 and £29,000, the higher-rate tax threshold, who would pay tax at 22 per cent on most of their income. These are the B, C1-C2 voters that the Conservatives need to win over."

Charles Levett-Scrivener, of Towry Law financial advisers, thinks Mr Clarke may announce a series of tax cuts to make basic rate 22 per cent in 1996-97, 21 per cent the following year and 20 per cent the next. He also says the Budget may allow over-65s who earn more than £15,000 to get the extra personal allowance.

Crackdown
looms for
NI tax
loopholes

For the second year, there is speculation that the Chancellor may finally abolish the loopholes allowing employers to avoid tax on large bonuses to executives. By paying these bonuses not in cash, but in assets as diverse as greyhounds, life insurance policies and Savile Row suits, companies can escape 10.2 per cent employer National Insurance and handsomely reward workers. The companies need only ensure that the items are not negotiable, not encashable and not traded on any market to circumvent regulations already introduced in an attempt to put an end to this tax-saving stratagem. The Government has succeeded in outlawing schemes based on gold bars, diamonds and cash unit trusts, but tax specialists have always found alternatives.

Some accountancy firms are now drawing up schemes, believing that the Chancellor may move to extend employer National Insurance to all employee benefits, without exclusion. The firms concerned will not be drawn on the nature of the assets that they are using.

Forcing employers to pay NI on all benefits is seen as politically acceptable. One specialist remarked: "It's an easy area to attack."

Weekend Money
is edited by
Anne Ashworth

Hands-off warning from lenders

Lenders are praying that the Chancellor does not announce any measures in the Budget to upset the fragile equilibrium of the housing market, particularly following this week's 0.25 per cent rise in base rates.

In a marked change from previous years, the Council of Mortgage Lenders is not pressing for any special help for borrowers in this year's Budget. It says: "Our message is 'steady as she goes'. Let the market take its course. Leave tax relief alone and don't introduce anything which could introduce distortions."

Last year, when the housing market was still moribund, lenders urged the Chancellor to introduce changes to boost the market, including extra tax relief for first-time buyers and the

abolition of stamp duty on homes costing more than £60,000. None of these came to fruition.

The Halifax, the largest mortgage lender, echoed the CML's sentiments, calling for a steady hand as the market shows signs of improvement. The society's monthly price index shows that house prices have risen 5.2 per cent over the year. But the society says any rise in the cost of borrowing could harm the recovery.

This would include any further reductions in mortgage interest relief at source (Miras). The relief has been reduced steadily since 1994 when it was restricted to 20 per cent on the first £30,000 of mortgage interest. Since April 1995 it has been further restricted and now stands at 15 per cent on the first £30,000.

Possible rethink on savings

The Government could introduce tax relief on savings put aside for children's university education, according to Mr Levett-Scrivener, who points out that the ever-decreasing student grant means many more students have to rely on financial support from their parents.

"Tax relief would help many Tory voters," he said. To encourage the nation to make provision for its old age, the Chancellor is unlikely to reduce the generous pension tax breaks available. These include the tax-free lump sum on retirement and higher-rate relief on contributions. To

promote other types of long-term saving, he could give individuals a new allowance to set against investment income from savings, replacing the current tax-efficient schemes, Personal Equity Plans (PEPs) and Tax Exempt Special Savings Accounts (Tessas).

The Building Societies Association is calling for PEPs and Tessas to be replaced with a personal allowance. This would remove existing tax breaks from PEPs and Tessas, which the BSA believes are confusing because they have been introduced in a "piecemeal" fashion.

Mr Parry-Wingfield at

Deloitte & Touche suggests that an alternative would be to introduce a new Personal Investment Plan (PIP). This would allow savers to invest a certain amount tax free in a plan without having to follow set rules about the types of investments held within the plan. Mr Parry-Wingfield adds that Labour is working on a similar proposal. Mr Clarke might wish to preempt them.

Last year the Chancellor sprang a surprise for basic rate taxpayers with savings in building societies and bank deposits, gilts, corporate bonds and unit trusts by

cutting tax on their investment income by 5 per cent. Basic rate taxpayers now pay only 20 per cent on their interest, although their tax rate is 24 per cent (previously 25 per cent). Higher rate taxpayers continue to pay tax on their interest at 40 per cent.

The Chancellor is believed to be unlikely to make further moves in this direction. If he does introduce some kind of personal allowance or personal investment plan, the allowance could work out less generous than existing tax breaks on PEPs and Tessas because he is strapped for cash.

Wrap up for autumn winds

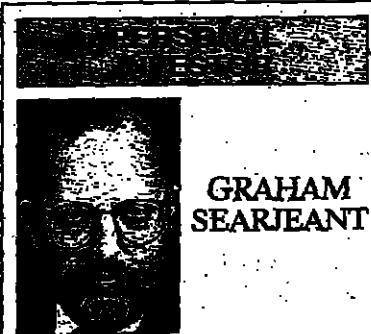
October had, after all, one last surprise for investors in the UK stock market. Falling prices, a minimal interest rate rise that defied the City consensus and, yes, autumn gales. Enough investors and City folk still remember the great gale of October 1987, and share prices falling like uprooted trees straight afterwards, to make last week one of mild anxiety, finger-crossing and much scratching about the financial statistics to see if there might be any plausible reason for history to repeat itself. There was not.

Examination will not turn up much comparable to the overblown share price boom of 1987, at least in the UK. In that year, the FT-SE 100 index rose so precipitously that, even after the worst postwar crash, it still ended the year slightly higher than it had started.

How different from 1996, when the London market has had long dull periods. True, share prices rose by 12 per cent between mid-July and mid-October, but that still left the index only 10½ per cent up since new year, at its peak. In effect, all the year's earnings and dividend growth were translated into stock market values in three months.

After that, you would expect the short-term setback of the past couple of weeks and a dull patch until a new buying story or new money flows turn up. Most analysts thought that prices were slightly ahead of the long-term trend at the start of the year and the latest novelties are not encouraging.

Some of the wider special dividend and buyback schemes have been scotched. Sterling is becoming too strong

GRAHAM
SEARJEANT

for comfort for exporters of run-of-the-mill products and will not help reported profits of groups that earn a lot from operations in other currencies. Interest rates are widely expected to edge up modestly again next year, rather than down, whoever wins a general election. And the prospect of that election is likely to produce hesitancy among buyers, even though the main parties profess barely distinguishable ideas about short-term economic management.

Sterling's rise is a symptom of another unwelcome global development. Like Viking raiders or Attila the Hun, big speculators are back. For the best part of three years, financial markets have moved roughly in harmony with underlying economic trends, to an unusual and comforting degree. To the leveraged movers and shakers, however, this attempt at serenity must have seemed exasperatingly tedious, almost unbearable. It was certainly less profitable. At last, however, the fanned traders are

beginning to open up some imbalances and therefore inject potential instability back into world markets.

For veterans of the 1992-93 raids on Europe's exchange-rate mechanism, the run-up to economic and monetary union is bound to provide a happy hunting ground. Prestensions and manoeuvrings between now and spring 1998, when the founding members will be chosen, invite mischief-making. Assuming the project goes ahead, but without Britain, the early money and interest rate policies of the European central bank will be keenly fought and keenly observed. Before that, the run-up to EMU may well bring clashes between interest rate policies in Frankfurt and Washington.

Investors can only keep an eye on this undercurrent to make sure that UK markets do not swing into obvious imbalance. Gilt-edged, selling on pre-tax yields of about 4½ per cent net of inflation, may look slightly better value than the FT-SE index, but these are not extremes. And City insiders already scent the next good news for prices: a possible pre-election rush of big takeover bids, many of them cross-border.

Better to follow the advice of the veteran top analyst and fund manager Nils Taube, quoted in James Morion's *Investing with the Grand Masters* (published by FT Pitman) and back companies, not markets. "In all the years I have been investing," he says, "I reckon there have been only five or six occasions when the overall performance of the market really mattered."

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Will there be a sigh of relief over childcare?



The Chancellor is being pushed to help working parents in his Budget with some form of tax relief on childcare.

There is always a glimmer of hope that the Chancellor will help working parents in his Budget with some form of tax relief on childcare. At present, the only relief given is that childcare provided by a workplace nursery is not counted as a taxable benefit in kind. That helps only 2 per cent of working mothers. All other employer schemes and forms of childcare do not attract any tax relief (Sarah Jones writes).

Employers and pressure groups are calling for an extension of tax relief to other employer assistance, such as childcare vouchers. Duncan Milligan, spokesman for Parents at Work, says: "There is no logic in providing tax exemption for workplace nurseries and not for vouchers, and we would hope the Government will extend tax relief to all employer contributions to childcare costs. Beyond that, giving tax relief on non-workplace childcare would simply help the relatively well off."

The National Childminding Association says there is a strong argument for subsidising all childcare. Gill Haynes, chief executive, says: "Quality childcare costs more than a lot of women can afford. The key question is who pays for quality childcare. At the moment the responsibility is placed on parents or the provider. Instead it should be shared by parents, employers and the Government." The association argues that the Government should look at how the tax system can be used to support and to encourage employers. Ms Haynes says: "The excuse for not doing anything is always cost. But the hidden costs of not making quality childcare affordable are even greater, in terms of women not being able to work and to children left in informal care."

The vast majority of childcare, 69 per cent, is provided informally. Childminders account for 25 per cent, day care nurseries 14 per cent, nannies 9 per cent and workplace nurseries, 2 per cent. The Government issued a Green Paper last summer, *Options for Childcare*, which asks the question: How can childcare be made more affordable to parents? The consultation period has been extended to early December.

Adam Jones on possible restrictions to profit-related pay schemes

£1.5bn pay monster in need of control

When Nigel Lawson introduced profit-related pay (PRP) in 1987, he thought it would give both companies and employees a boost.

By allowing employers to link some of a worker's pay to corporate performance, it was reasoned that fewer people would have to be laid off during the lean times, since the wage bill would slim itself. During a boom, staff would receive a larger and fairer reward for their labour. At all times, employees would be able to take advantage of tax relief on their profit-related component of their pay. Like Dr Frankenstein, Lawson probably didn't think his creature would turn on the political party that gave it life. Such a thought would have seemed ridiculous soon after the introduction of PRP, anyway, as the innovation was not widely taken up.

But subsequent tweaks, such as increasing the amount that could be paid free of tax, combined with a shift in attitudes among the workforce, made profit-related pay enormously successful. So successful, in fact, that the Government is reeling from the cost of supplying tax relief to the estimated four million or so members of PRP schemes.

The cost to the Government of PRP in 1996-97 is estimated at £1.5 billion, compared with a budgeted £550 million. In the last Budget before the election, Kenneth Clarke may well be forced to act, before the deficit gets even more formidable.

Abolition is unlikely. Instead, pruning measures are being predicted by City tax advisers, to reduce Mr Lawson's monster to more benign, Herman Munster-ish dimensions.

Under current regulations, employees are allowed to receive £4,000 a year, or 20 per cent of salary, whichever is lower, through PRP schemes without paying tax, regardless of the size of their salary. If a

profitable company wants to give staff a larger share of the spoils, they can, but the excess will not be free of tax.

Schemes have been introduced in three main ways: as tax-efficient replacements for existing bonus schemes; as a substitute for offering an annual pay rise; and as salary conversion vehicles, where staff agree to waive up to £4,000 of their wage, hoping to receive a similar or larger sum through PRP instead.

All would be affected by the change widely expected from the Budget: a withdrawal of 40 per cent tax relief, leaving just the basic 24 per cent rate in place. Scheme members who pay the higher rate of tax and

receive the full £4,000 allowed under PRP would be left £640 poorer, says Rachel Bragg, from Ernst & Young, the accountants.

That assumes income tax levels are left unchanged. If the basic rate is cut by one or two pence in the pound, as is thought possible, the loss will be greater — £690 or £720.

The impact this would have on Tory heartland voters leads Tony Butcher, a partner at Deloitte & Touche, the accountants, to think that PRP will not be changed in this way so soon before an election. But others argue that the massive deficit has somehow to be contained.

Mr Clarke could also deny

OLD TENANT WALLSPORT

all new schemes any tax relief. The prospect is likely to spark an undignified scramble by companies to register new schemes before the Budget. They assume, or hope, Mr Clarke will not make any retrospective changes.

Another option is to make it more difficult for PRP schemes to be eligible. One criticism of PRP schemes is that they can be vehicles for companies to avoid paying tax, with salaries substituted by payments that are supposedly profit-related but are actually "sure-things".

Tightened restrictions could hit companies that are organised as partnerships, such as accountancy firms.

To run PRPs, some partnerships have had to set up structures called service companies because they cannot fulfil the accounting requirements in their original form. But these service companies are artificial creations, fed by an income from the company that created it. Their profits could be seen to be "managed" and therefore not in keeping with the PRP ethos, which demands a certain level of risk.

If you are offered participation in a new PRP scheme that might fall into this category, you would be wise to be extra diligent when considering joining, especially if membership involves you giving up a portion of your salary.

And if tax relief is withdrawn, you shouldn't expect your company to make up any shortfall in your salary. PRP schemes generally have clauses where the company says it will not make good any loss caused in this manner, says Rachel Bragg.

If Mr Clarke squeezes PRP, there is a strong chance companies would stick to this line, in the short term at least, before alternative pay structures evolve. The added cost in the wage bill could be too great to do otherwise.



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SCOTTISH WIDOWS

Adam Jones on the outlook for shares in America

US looking good

A joke doing the rounds of the City says that Bill Clinton is doing so well running the US economy that he may soon feel confident enough to start dating again.

It may be black humour before Tuesday's presidential election, but reaction in New York and in London to US economic indicators suggests that Clinton and Alan Greenspan, the Federal Reserve Chairman, have hardly put a foot wrong recently.

Mr Greenspan anticipated the slowing in the growth of the economy in the second half of the year — an easing-off that defused fears of a harmful boom. Employment and wage figures released yesterday were as expected, even slightly better, with no evidence of an increased inflation risk through rising wages, even though unemployment is low. Share earnings in the expensive US equities market were not threatened by labour costs, although they may eventually be squeezed by a low-inflationary climate.

Analysts were pleased that their predictions and plans for the crucial election did not require much tweaking. Essentially, both Wall Street and the City see the presidential race as a sure win for Clinton.

Less certain is how Congress will go. Analysts fear that Clinton's Democrats will win control of Congress and put the party in a position to dictate economic policy on their own terms. They worry that this will lead to looser fiscal and trade policy, leading to a greater risk of inflation.

Bob Dole was playing on this anxiety last week, saying the Democrats had a mixture of slow growth and tax increases — "a recipe for disaster". Dole declared: "If he is re-elected, brace yourself for the Clinton recession."

Last week, some US technology stocks fell sharply because of gloomy prospects for retail computer sales, and investors' fears of a post-election market sell-off. CompUSA, the retailer, fell 8 per cent on Tuesday. Compaq and IBM also suffered



It has been a rollercoaster ride for some New York shares

from this profit-taking. However, the hi-tech sector took some comfort from a forecast by the Semiconductor Industry Association that microchip sales are recovering.

If the Democrats do win Congress, the US markets will be hit harder than these technology stocks last week. Then UK bonds and equities will feel the squeeze from across the Atlantic — the UK bond market is not at its strongest

right now. However, if Clinton wins control of the House of Representatives, but not the Senate, it is likely that this partial control of Congress would not ring alarm bells.

In the UK last week, shares were dancing more to the tune of Kenneth Clarke's surprise interest rate rise. It pushed the FT-SE 100 back below the 4,000 that it had waited so long to exceed before quietening down in anticipation of US data at the end of the week.

Longer term, the US will still face the threat of inflation, as will the UK. One London analyst said the narrow inflation range of 2.6 per cent to 3.2 per cent over the past couple of years in the US was particularly impressive. He added: "The US economy is looking extremely healthy. It looks like Greenspan has achieved exactly what he set out to do."

As for the epic rise on Wall Street, its end has been forecast many times, but it has not collapsed. In passing 6,000, the Dow Jones industrial average has enjoyed its longest bull run, leaving shares expensive for the income they will earn.

So what happens after the election? Last week, the Smith Barney Consulting Group asked 70 US money managers which stocks they thought would do well after a Clinton re-election. In spite of their wobble this week, technology stocks were thought to be a sector that would be positively affected, as was financial services. Healthcare and tobacco stocks were thought likely to suffer. Investors must understand, however, that entering the US market at this stage of its cycle is risky.

THE Money Advice Trust, which funds debt counselling services, such as National Debtline, needs a further £15 million this year to carry out its much needed work. You might

Where will all the savers go?

Renewed popularity for that favourite pastime, carping, will be one result of the announcement of the Alliance & Leicester windfall details (see page 35). This is an armchair sport for which the only necessary skill is speed with pen and chequebook.

The society's decision to award the same number of shares to all investors, whatever the size of their balance, means that larger, long-term customers have seen a poor reward for their loyalty. They will swell the ranks of the carpers who will now decamp for other societies tipped to shed their mutual status. Provided that savers leave £100 invested with the A&L, they will not lose entitlement to 250 shares.

Among those most likely to desert are those who have been irritated by the society's long silence on whether it was planning a basic or a variable share distribution. They contend that the society delayed making its plans public in order to hold on to their cash for as long as possible. Their resentment will not be lessened by Alliance & Leicester's justification for its decision. A basic distribution is, it says, the fairest solution as 83 per cent of its savers have less than £5,000 in their accounts.

In search of another windfall, the disaffected A&L investors will head for smaller societies that could be vulnerable to takeover, such as the Chelsea or the Portman. Or larger societies, such as the Nationwide, that are assiduously



COMMENT
ANNE ASHWORTH
Personal Finance
Editor

wooing disaffected customers of its soon to be plucked peers. True to its tight-lipped form, the A&L is not openly admitting its customers can move their money elsewhere. It will also penalise some who dare to do so. Carpers who, last December, found £5,000 to open a Bonus 90 account, after the raising of the minimum investment, will find that if they remove £4,900, they will earn just 0.5 per cent on their remaining £100. The Portman pays 4.50 per cent on a similar amount.

Those A&L savers who find carping too strenuous an activity can be reassured that the society's other rates do not compare too badly with the competition. This is not philanthropy. The A&L is preparing itself for the scrutiny of City investment analysts who will pore over its accounts before flotation. An absence of savers in a savings institution would be tricky to explain.

Scrooge lives

THE Money Advice Trust, which funds debt counselling services, such as National Debtline, needs a further £15 million this year to carry out its much needed work. You might

rowers in difficulties, some, in practice, prefer to make their life difficult.

Own goal

SURPRISING as it may seem, some parties do emerge with credit from the home income plan scandal. For example, the campaign waged by Barnett Sampson, the legal firm representing many of the elderly victims has been praiseworthy. The energy of the Investors Compensation Scheme has also been commendable, although its efforts have sometimes been misdirected.

Among those whose reputations have not been enhanced by the sorry episode are the building societies that for so long resisted paying out compensation. They include the West Bromwich. Yesterday the court ruled that borrowers could move to sue this society for restitution.

While this development is good news for the pensioners who were advised to borrow against the value of their properties and invest the proceeds in investment bonds, it raises questions about the society itself.

The West Bromwich could have paid out long ago and scored a public relations coup, more valuable than any compensation bill. Instead, it has preferred to play a waiting game and attract bad publicity. This smacks not only of indifference to a group of vulnerable pensioners, but also of a lack of commercial sense.

Holiday home or legal timebomb?

Talk of cross-border activities would normally conjure up images of smuggling or terrorism but it seems that owning property in more than one country can give the individual investor an enormous headache.

"Cross-border ownership of property can create a range of issues of which many are completely aware. Something as simple as buying a second home in France could mean walking into French forced heirship rules and French capital taxes," said David Oliver, tax partner at Arthur Andersen and co-author of a new guide, *Estate Planning for UK Individuals Residing or Investing Abroad*.

More and more individuals are buying homes abroad, whether it is the holiday cottage we have all promised ourselves in Tuscany or because work has taken you to another country and you need to

buy a second home. You end up trying to reconcile two legal systems and two tax systems, especially when it comes to inheritance of the property.

Tax planning will depend on the country in which you are actually resident and on the terms of any double taxation agreement between the UK and the country where you own property.

If you die domiciled in England and Wales, English law applies to movable assets and the law of the country where you own property applies to immovables. If you die domiciled outside England, English law applies only to immovable property in England; moveables pass in accordance with the law of the country where you resided.

In some countries' succession problems can be easily avoided by holding assets in joint names so that, on death,

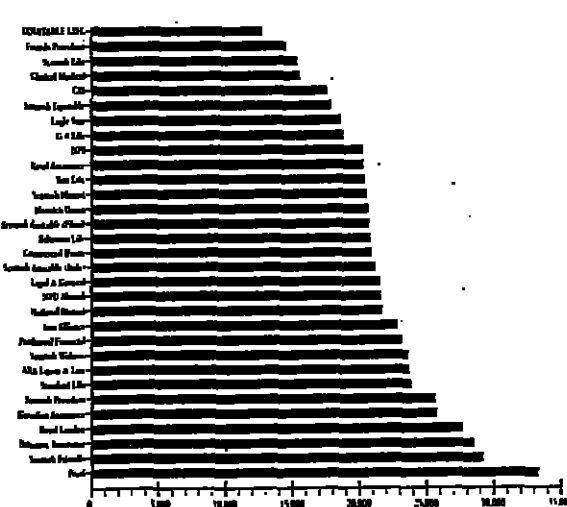
they pass automatically to the survivor without need to obtain probate. But it is not always that simple. In Australia, for example, the guide suggests a discretionary trust by will could avoid capital gains tax in France, you should take advantage of gift-splitting between spouses for gifts to children; in Italy assets can be protected if owned through a non-Italian, registered company; and in Spain it helps to have a will written in Spanish made before a Spanish notary.

"The main solution however is to simply know what you are getting into in the first place," says Mr Oliver. "Cross border ownership can be expensive in terms of tax, but the main cost is usually the administrative hassle. Dealing with local lawyers for example can be a nightmare."

SARAH JONES

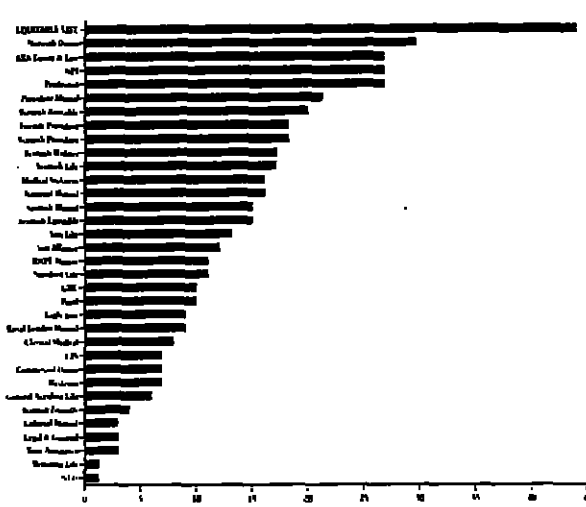
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HOW MUCH YOU ARE CHARGED



The effect of charges

INVESTMENT TRACK RECORD



No. of Top Ten Appearances 1974-1996
Source: Planned Savings surveys of regular contribution with-profit personal pension plans, 1974-1996

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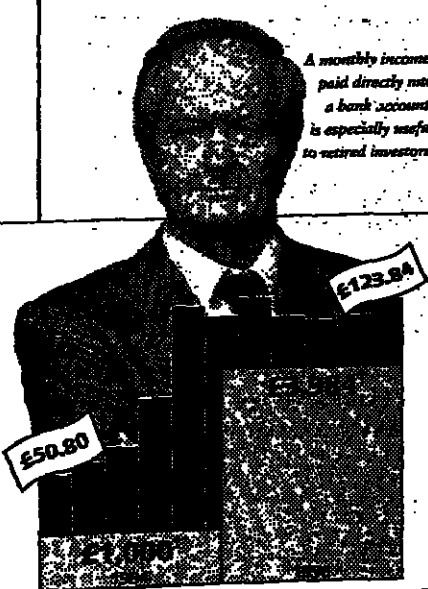
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** Source: Morningstar UK Equity Income Index. Top quartile over 1, 3, 5 & 10 years and since launch to 1/10/96 offer to bid, net account valuations.

† Source and basis of capital value: Morningstar offer to bid, no income. Income payments are net. A £1,000 investment made 5 years ago would have grown in capital value to £1,486.

The income at the first calendar year would have been £50.80 and reached £123.04 last year. The income at the first calendar year would have been £50.80 and reached £123.04 last year. The income at the first calendar year would have been £50.80 and reached £123.04 last year.

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Sarah Jones asks whether rates can go only one way from here

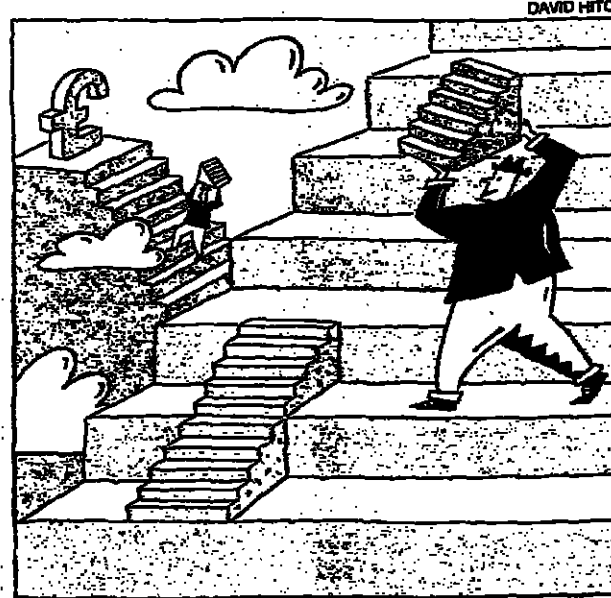
Big lenders hold off until Budget

Savers hoping that this week's rise in base rate will mean better returns from their investments will be sorely disappointed. Mortgage rates come first and if lenders stick to their immediate reaction and don't touch mortgage rates, then they will also raise saving rates alone.

As ever they are waiting, they say, to see who will move first. This time they also have a perfect excuse for fence-sitting — the Budget. What is the point, they argue, of going to the considerable expense of telling customers of rate changes, if three weeks later they have to make further alterations. A quarter percent sounds a lot to savers in these days of paltry rates, but for providers it is really not worth the bother.

Bucking the trend slightly is the Leeds & Holbeck, which immediately raised the interest rates on its two and three-year Fixed Rate Bond by up to 0.35 per cent. The two-year bond now pays 6.85 per cent on balances from £1,000 and 7 per cent from £10,000, making it the market leader. The three-year bond gives 7 per cent from £1,000 and 7.25 per cent from £10,000. That is only beaten by the Coventry's three-year bond paying 7.3 per cent from £1,000.

"With the rise in base rate, we can now invest the funds from the bonds at a higher rate. Our choice was to make more profit on the bond or to pass on the benefit to customers," says Phil Donovan, senior general manager at the Leeds & Holbeck. "Any increase across the whole range of savings products would need a rise in mortgage rates



and we like others want to avoid that."

While providers are reluctant to interfere with the recovery in the housing market, any change to savings will be on isolated products. Short-term fixed investments, usually limited issues, are the most likely candidates.

Darren Stevens, public relations manager at the Chelsea, says: "It seems the biggest players will be waiting until after the Budget, but one or two smaller players may need to get more aggressive on some of their savings rates. We have been surprised, for example, by the lack of response to our postal account and would expect a few more competitive rates to come out."

Providers also remain unconvinced that this week heralded the start of a steady,

consistent rise in base rate.

"There may be further adjustments post-Budget, and base rate could drop back to 5.75 per cent in the run-up to the election," says John Gully, head of corporate affairs at the Portman. "Our view at the moment is even if rates do rise, it will be a fairly flat rise and nothing dramatic for some time to come. That means its business as usual for both savers and borrowers."

The base rate change has also done little to alter the rules in the fixed rate mortgage game. There may be a small impact on short-term rates but long-term rates should stay much the same, simply because lenders have already pre-guessed the long-term movement in base rate.

Patrick Bunton, of London & Country, mortgage brokers, says: "If all things stay equal, a few might move in January. The ones to watch are those committed mutuals, like the Nationwide and Principality, who have kept their variable rates lower than competitors and therefore will have lower profit margins. Sustaining the base rate rise themselves will not be easy."

As with savings products some of the best fixed rates are short term. The theory goes that we are at the bottom of the cycle and any base rate movement has to be up, so you should find yourself a low

fixed deal. And if you fix for one or two or three years, it won't matter if rates don't climb dramatically after all.

However, Mr Bunton says that you could be coming off a two or three-year rate mid-term of the next government, when rates are traditionally high and with redemption penalties you may be locked into an unattractive variable rate. On the other hand a five-year rate should take you through the next government. If you need flexibility or you have funds to cope with an interest rise, go for a discount. If your budget is tight, fix your rate for as long as you can afford.

For discounts, London & Country recommend the Principality's one-year 4.99 per cent discount and Nationwide's 1.3 per cent discount for three years. Both are made more attractive by coming off a low variable rate of 6.49 per cent. There is also a healthy 2 per cent discount until March 1999 from National Counties.

For fixed rates the Portman's 5.99 per cent until September 1998 boasts absolutely no redemption penalties and a guarantee that at the end of the term another good rate will be offered. For longer term, one of the best rates is Cheltenham & Gloucester's five-year 7.25 per cent. For those borrowing over 75 per cent it has the added benefit of no indemnity guarantee charge.

There is some good news for savers this week. Northern Rock has bowed to pressure and scrapped penalties on withdrawals from its Great North Postal Share and Deposit Account. A popular account because of its interest rate, 5.55-6.15 per cent, savers were angered that they were charged 30 days interest on any withdrawals.

The society now says investors will be able to make free withdrawals as long as they give 30 days notice. However, the changes will not come into effect until October 1, 1997. The Woolwich has also similarly backed down on its Postal 60 account. Holders can now at least close the account without penalty, as long as they give 60 days notice.

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Alliance & Leicester bonanza first of four

Caroline Merrell
answers your
questions on
the big pay
day at the
societies

After months of silence, the Alliance & Leicester Building Society has finally unveiled the terms of its £3 billion stock market flotation to take place next year.

In a controversial deal that treats all members equally, disregarding the amount they have saved with the society, the 24 million qualifying savers and borrowers will each receive 250 free shares worth approximately £1,000 at today's stock market prices.

The Alliance & Leicester board opted for a flat distribution, rather than the variable distribution of shares preferred by National & Provincial and Cheltenham & Gloucester building societies.

Both based the number of shares they offered to members on the size of account balances. The Halifax and Woolwich, which are also headed for the stock market in 1997, will follow their example.

Peter White, Alliance & Leicester group chief executive, said that the directors had chosen a flat distribution because very many of his members had small balances.

He said: "It is a question of one man, one vote. We felt that an equal distribution would be the best way of dealing with the shares."

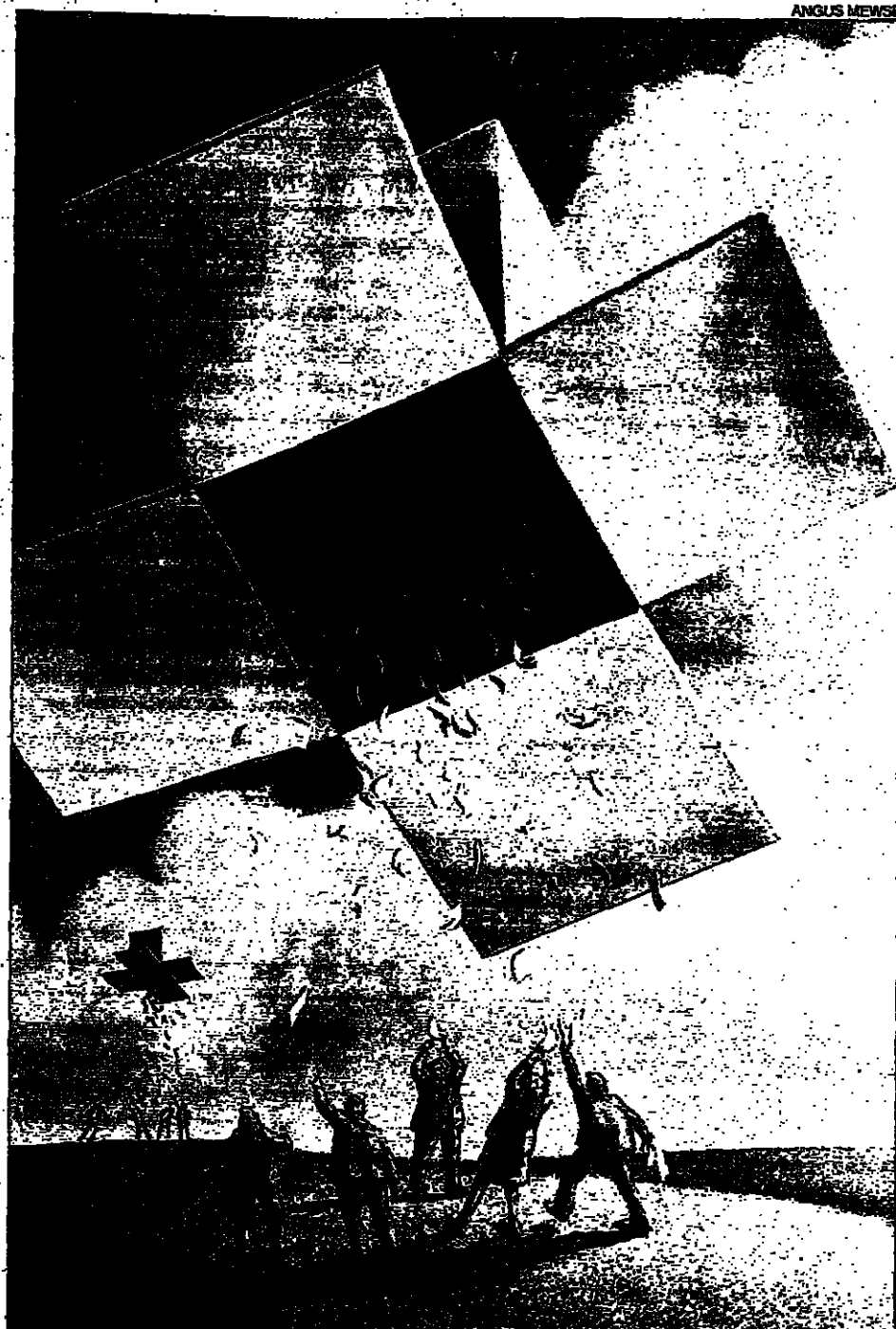
The decision to offer a basic distribution means that the Alliance & Leicester will be the first of the four building societies proposing to float in 1997 to reach the stock market.

The share price of the new bank is expected to be between 385p and 435p. The terms of the distribution also mean that some of the society's larger savers will probably decamp to other societies, leaving the minimum in their accounts.

We answer some of the questions you have posed on the details of the deal.

Q Who will qualify for the bonus shares after the flotation?

A If you are a sole or first named member with an account open with the society on December 31, 1995, and also had a minimum total balance of £100 in one or more share or accounts on October 14, 1996, you will qualify for the shares, and



will be able to vote, providing you keep your account open until a second qualifying date.

This has yet to be set, but is expected to be in the first half of next year. Borrowers must have had a mortgage with an outstanding debt of more than £100 on December 31, 1995. They must keep this amount of debt until December 5 if they vote by post, or December 10, if they vote in person at the London Arena. After that, to qualify for the shares they must keep their mortgage account open to the final qualifying date.

Q Will you receive anything if you are not eligible to vote?

A Some members of the society will not be eligible to vote, but will be eligible to receive a cash bonus.

These will be members who opened their accounts

after December 31, 1995, and on or before October 14, 1996. They include those who had less than £100 in their accounts at that date.

They also include those under the age of 18 on December 10, 1996. The cash bonus is expected to be about 11 per cent of the member's total qualifying balance.

Q What is the timetable for the conversion and the vote?

A Qualifying members must vote by post on the conversion by December 5, or they can attend the special general meeting which is to be held on December 10, at the London Arena, in the Isle of Dogs, East London.

If the society gets enough people to vote in favour of the conversion, then it is expected to float on the stock market at the beginning of next year.

For the flotation to go

ahead, 20 per cent of all eligible investors must vote, and at least 75 per cent of investing members who vote must vote in favour of the conversion plans. Those planning to use the post to vote, should note that there may be a postal strike at the beginning of December.

Q What if the first named accountholder has died since the conversion was announced?

A If the first named accountholder died after December 31, 1995, then the second named accountholder will not be eligible to vote, unless the deceased nominated someone to cast their vote by proxy.

If the first named accountholder died before December 31, 1995, and another person became the sole or first named member on the account, then they will be eligible to vote.

If the deceased member was entitled to free shares, then the deceased member's successor will get the shares, regardless of whether they can vote.

Q Will it be easy to sell the shares I receive after the conversion has taken place?

A The Alliance & Leicester, along with the Woolwich and the Halifax, will be offering its newly fledged shareholders a share dealing service.

In the first year after the Abbey National flotation, around 25 per cent of shareholders sold their shares. In the subsequent four years, another 25 per cent sold their shares.

The Alliance & Leicester share dealing service will operate for a short period after conversion. Full details of this service will be released closer to the flotation date.

Q Will I have to pay tax on my shares?

A The initial distribution of the shares will be free from capital gains tax.

However, an individual may be liable for capital gains tax when they sell the shares, if their overall annual gain exceeds the £6,300 exemption limit.

Dividends will be liable for income tax in the usual way, unless the shares are held through a personal equity plan (Pep).

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A preference for the familiar

ANDREW HASSON



Ellen Sharp was upset that Abbey National closed her local National & Provincial branch. She also has no time for banks. So she has moved her money to the Portman. "My N&P branch used to be just a minute's walk away, now I have to take a bus to the nearest Abbey branch in the

next town. I chose the Portman because it is close by and I can get a monthly interest account," said Mrs Sharp, 79, of Peasehaven, Sussex. "The building society seems friendly and they know who you are. I don't like banks. You don't know where you are with them, it's all big finance."

Sarah Jones on the savers who may prefer to jump ship

The unconverted flee

Next year 19 million customers of building societies will find that they have become customers of a bank. Will they remain loyal to the new institution, or will they hotfoot it back to a building society?

Officially, converting societies say that they expect customers to stay with them, but at branch level there is evidence that customers, variously disgruntled by the conversion process, will be queuing up to leave.

In August Abbey National took over the National & Provincial. Officially the Abbey says it is too early for exact figures, but "the feeling is that customers are staying with us". However, building societies claim that the surge they have seen in new accounts comes directly from ex-N&P customers. Significantly these have not been for minimum balances, which indicates it is

not carpetbaggers moving back to a building society hoping for another windfall.

Mike Hildred, manager of savings at Bradford & Bingley, says: "We have seen a peak in September of new money coming into the society which we can attribute to N&P customers. Feedback from the branches shows that customers are either unhappy at losing the N&P brand or at the way Abbey National has merged accounts. We have had elderly customers, for example, disgruntled that their money has been put into an account with a card transaction rather than a passbook."

"We are expecting the same sort of activity when the Halifax and others convert next year. They have been clever though in giving shares rather than cash, which will slow down the moving process and, at the point of share dealing, give the new bank a chance to defend itself."

At the time of the N&P takeover, the Nationwide launched its campaign "If your building society turns into a bank, laugh all the way to the building society", claiming committed mutuals

offer more attractive rates of interest than banks. It was sufficiently satisfied by the results in terms of new business to launch another campaign this week, "Extra, extra, read all about it", comparing its own savings rates with those of the Halifax.

Research by Kleinwort Benson shows that savers with societies planning to convert to banks are receiving returns on average nearly 0.5 per cent lower than that offered by traditional building society rivals. Against that trend both Bristol & West and Alliance & Leicester now feature in postal accounts best buy tables.

The Halifax, whose drift to conversion will have taken almost three years, says it is aware of the theory that customers have kept their money in the Halifax for the sole reason of getting a bonus and will leave on conversion. But it

Continued on page 37, col 1

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Adam Jones on National Savings after detection of a £50m 'black hole'

The cast-iron guarantees that cover your nest-eggs

Through its bonds for children and pensioners, National Savings looks after the money of some of the most vulnerable sections of society. The attraction is the security. The Government guarantees that your money, be it in a bond or a National Savings deposit account, is ultimately safe from the dangers that can attend private-sector investment.

The agency responsible for managing the £57 billion deposited by 30 million National Savings customers has its accounts checked by the independent National Audit Office (NAO). The latest audit, relating to 1993 and 1994, has led to the discovery of a £50 million "black hole" in these accounts and a damning report to Parliament. Sir John Bourn, head of the NAO, said the weaknesses in accounting procedures led to an increased risk that fraud and error could go undetected.

There is no question that investors' money will be harmed by the huge discrepancy. The cash will probably turn up. But the ultimate security of National Savings should not give it sacred cow status. As a huge institution, there are still inevitable risks of mismanagement, red tape and customer frustration. These should be considered, especially since there is talk of getting National Savings to administer a new pension scheme. Below, Weekend Money explains the NAO's findings and outlines the procedures to follow if you have a problem with National Savings.

Q First things first. Are you totally sure that our National Savings bonds and deposit accounts are not at risk?

A Quite possibly. But the eventual burden may turn out to be far less than £50 million, or perhaps nothing at all.

Q Funds invested in National Savings are protected by statute. If things go wrong, they get bailed out by the Government's Consolidated Fund — which is the pool of money that funds the odds and ends of government business.

Q Does the accounting "black hole" mean that my dealings with National Savings have not been recorded properly and that I too could have a problem?

A No. The problem is not in the way deposits and purchases are registered, says the National Audit Office. It is in the way National



NATIONAL SAVINGS

Savings records what it does with the money. It can't get its own accounts to match up with the information held in the records people will be keeping at home — pass-

books and suchlike. One holding account, which provides a temporary home for deposits before they are sorted into the relevant account for each National Savings

product, was suggesting it was owed £37 million by investors — an impossible situation. The National Audit Office is suggesting a computer systems error.

Q Is there any link between this and the huge demand for National Savings in the last year?

A No. The problem relates to 1993-94. National Savings says that it first started addressing the deficiencies in its accounting procedures in mid-1994.

Q But there have been some problems with income payments for pensioners' bonds this year, haven't there?

A Yes, 474 pensioners were told they would receive their first payment in January 1996, but they only got it in February. Computer error — they weren't due their payments until February, as it happens.

Q If I have a problem like one of those pensioners, what can I do?

A Contact a customer relations manager at National Savings itself. Call (0191) 3864900 if your query is about savings certificates; (01253) 766151 if it concerns Premium Bonds, pensioners' bonds or income bonds;

(0141) 6362602 for other bond queries and (0141) 6494555 for investment and ordinary accounts.

Q And what if I am not satisfied by that?

A You can appeal to the Adjudicator for National Savings, David Farrington. The adjudicator decides cases where the customer is claiming a sum of money. The address is: The Secretary to the Adjudicator for National Savings, Room 450, Charles House, Kensington High Street, London, W14 8SD.

The adjudicator may make a decision based on the documents only. There could be a hearing, though. The decision is legally binding on both parties. In the financial year ending April 1, 1996, six cases were referred; five were dismissed and the sixth has not been decided. There are also 24 claims from the current financial year.

If the complaint does not involve a sum of money — it could relate to your treatment by staff, for instance — you can write to your MP and ask them to take it up with the Parliamentary Ombudsman at the House of Commons, but only after trying the customer services manager first. It has to be said that these complaints do not form a big part of the ombudsman's workload.

Savers who jump ship

continued from page 36
denies rumours that it is looking at incentives to keep customers. However, if only 5 per cent of its ten million customers decide to go, there will be half a million looking to invest £15 billion.

Diane Saunders, a Leeds independent financial adviser, says: "There is a lot of money waiting to walk next June. Many of our clients are irked at having to keep their money in the Halifax for so long, and we are hearing the same message from other advisers."

The Woolwich, whose conversion is in some doubt, says it expects customers to be loyal. "Not only will they have their investments and mortgages with us but they will also be shareholders, so they will have a double interest in staying," says a spokesman.

However, David Jones, who is waiting to use his Woolwich savings for home improvements, is fed up with being locked into the society while being given so little information on the flotation. "I will decide whether to keep

or sell the shares nearer the time, but I shall certainly close my account. It is clearly in their interest to spin out the conversion process. They have a whole load of money sitting in accounts because people are frightened to move. That's fine for speculators but not for ordinary customers," he said.

Some analysts believe the conversions will be the beginning of the end for many of the remaining societies.

The mutuals claim otherwise. "For a start the new

banks will need a settling down period, concentrating on the administration of conversion, if they are to avoid some of the scandals we have seen with flotations to date," says John Gully, head of corporate affairs at the Portman.

"Secondly, there will be plenty of customers, one or two million at a conservative estimate, looking to return to a friendly, cuddly building society, and that will boost the societies for a few years at least."

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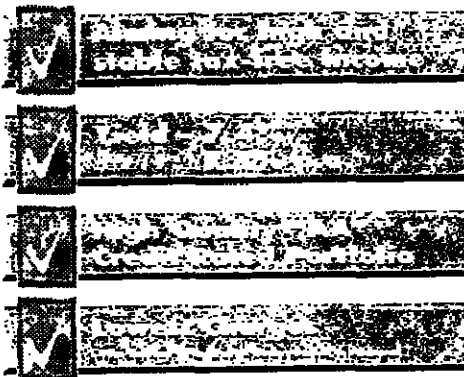
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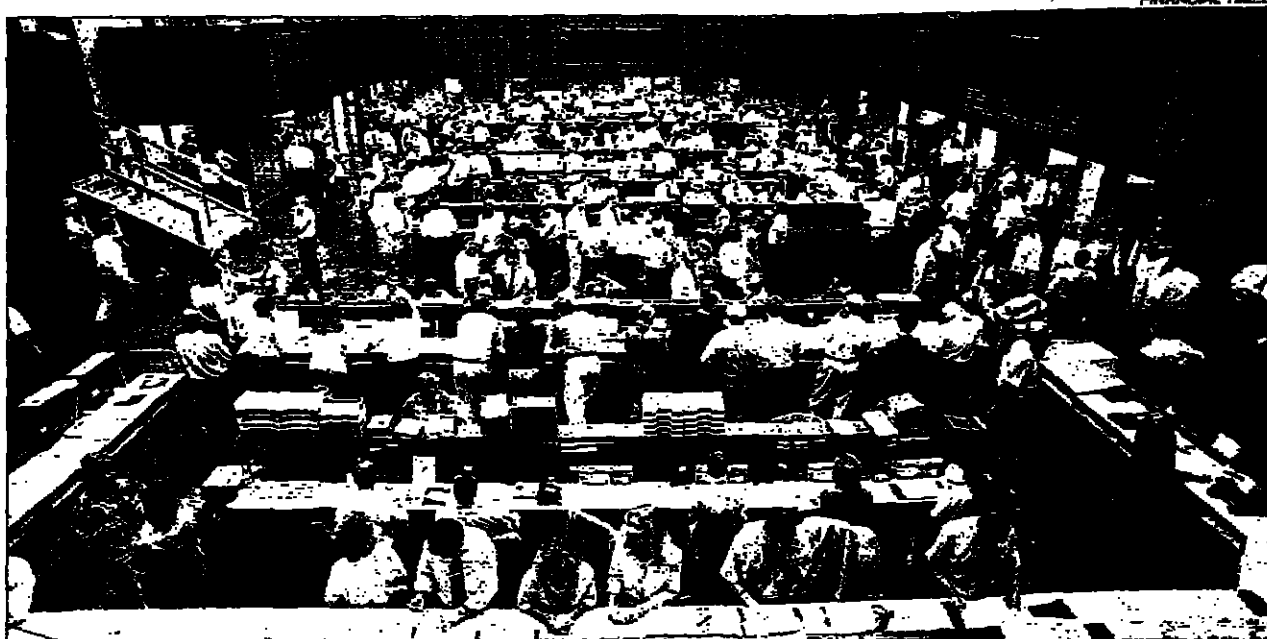
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Marianne Curphey on the blueprint for Kleinwort's new trust

Born-again Kepit can spread its net wider



Frankfurt calling: Mept hopes to tap into cheaper new European issues, including the Deutsche Telekom flotation

A reborn Kepit began life this week with £70 million under management and a wider investment brief than when the original trust was launched three years ago. Instead of investing only in new privatisations, the new trust, to be known as the Kleinwort Benson European Privatisation Trust (Kbept), can buy into companies privatised more than five years ago.

The original Kepit is being liquidised after complaints from investors about its uninspiring performance. Some have opted to reinvest in Kbept, or another trust, others have gone for a cash exit.

The shares were suspended at 97.5p, compared with the issue price of 100p. A circular to shareholders suggested that the cash settlement would be around 100.3p a share.

Shareholders are being offered three ordinary shares for every ten warrants they hold. They also have the option to cash in the shares. Almost 80 per cent of the 77,000 investors have opted to receive their capital in cash. Cheques will be posted on November 25. Of the remaining capital, about £20 million will go to the M&G European and General fund. There will be an extraordinary meeting on November 22, and liquidation will take about a year.

Some investors have asked for their capital to be placed in a cash trust which Kleinwort Benson has created. The Kleinwort Money Market Trust will invest in bank accounts, deposit accounts and other financial instruments, including gilts. It aims for 5 per cent growth a year, and will reinvest interest. Tax vouchers, but not dividends, will be sent to investors in May and November each year.

ing net assets and its share price.

There are also a raft of European privatisations including Deutsche Telekom, Telecom France, Telefonica in Spain and a number of Italian companies that are expected to be priced cheaply to appeal to private investors and which Mept is applying to buy.

Lough Callaghan, managing director of Mercury Asset Management, said Mept had a wider investment brief than Kepit and this would bear fruit as good privatisations came to market. "We can invest in companies that have already been privatised. There are no geographical boundaries and until recently we have invested quite heavily in the UK," Mr Callaghan defends the past performance of the trust. "We launched at what proved to be the top of the market and in 1995 in particular privatisa-

tions in France and Italy were too tightly priced. We did try to avoid some of the new issues which were particularly bad.

"Last year the Bundesbank was tight on monetary policy; interest rates were high and this hit some of the stocks we wanted to invest in. We feel we did well in difficult market conditions."

Investment trust analysts also see potential in Mept. NatWest Markets said the European sector was becoming expensive but recommends Kleinwort Charter, Continental Assets and Mept. Carolyn Cole, analyst, said Kleinwort Charter is "a big solid investment vehicle which has been quietly underperforming its rivals", while Continental Assets, from the Ivory & Stone stable, goes for quality stocks which should make healthy long-term returns.

Peter Walls, an analyst with Credit Lyonnais Laing, also likes Mept, along with Henderson Eurotrust and Foreign & Colonial Eurotrust because the two latter trusts have shown strong growth over the past 12 months. He believes the large discount between Mept's share price and its underlying assets make it cheap.

Mark Bolland, of the independent financial adviser (IFA) firm Chamberlain de Broe, likes Foreign & Colonial's Eurotrust and TR European Growth. Treg invests in solid blue-chip companies and Mr Bolland says sterling's recent strength means shares in Germany and France look cheaper than usual.

"Europe is a very disparate sector: there are mature markets like the UK plus highly volatile economies such as Russia, where business is done aggressively. You can go for different combinations depending on your attitude to risk."



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Helen Pridham reviews policies in her series on medical insurance

Good health care has its price

Buying comprehensive health cover is expensive. A family could easily end up paying more than £1,000 a year in premiums for private medical insurance and insurance to provide replacement income in times of ill-health. Many people either cannot afford to pay these premiums or are reluctant to abandon the NHS and sign up for private medical care. Yet they still face considerable bills if they require treatment or are off sick for a lengthy period.

This is why providers of other types of health related insurance policies, such as healthcare cash plans — also known as hospital cash plans — and accident and sickness plans, are expected to see a growth in demand as people look for cheaper alternatives.

Besides being cheaper, the cover provided by these schemes is different and more limited than that provided by mainstream health insurance. Nor do they solve the problems of those with pre-existing illness or related conditions not normally covered by the more expensive schemes.

Healthcare cash plans, as the term suggests, pay out cash benefits that are intended to help with expenses incurred during hospital admissions, dental and optical treatment, physiotherapy, maternity, recuperative care and so on. Some also pay out lump sums in the event of accidents which result in, say, loss of a limb or other forms of disablement.

One premium payment normally covers the whole family and typically starts as low as £1 a week. But the benefits are often modest and are not usually intended to cover the full cost of any expenses incurred. The largest provider of these schemes is the Hospital Savings Association (HSA), which has around three million subscribers. It offers a plan with five levels of benefit for premiums ranging from £1.45 per week to £11.60. Weekly benefits paid out during hospital in-patient treatment start at £70 and rise to £360. For dental treatment, annual benefits range from £29 to £232, while optical benefits rise from £27 to £216.

Most providers, with the exception of the HSA, are members of the British Health Care Association (BHCA). They insure another three million people and last year paid out more than £90 million. For them the wheel has almost turned full circle.

Sir David Perris, BHCA president, said: "The schemes were originally set up in the late 1800s to support and fund local hospitals and provide free treatment for members. When the NHS was set up, they started paying out cash benefits, but they still make significant donations to medical charities and the NHS."

Providers of plans do not claim they are substitutes for private medical insurance (PMI), but HSA likes to com-



British prices have not quite reached the levels of American private hospitals like those seen in Chicago Hope

pare its product favourably with PMI, pointing out, for example, that premiums for PMI are age-band related, while those on cash plans are not. HSA adds: "With HSA you do not need a doctor's referral to claim for the benefits. With BHI you do."

The growing attraction of cash plans led Legal & General recently to launch a hybrid

plan combining private medical insurance with limited cash benefits.

Accident and sickness plans are designed to provide regular payments for a limited period if you are unable to work due to sickness or accident. Typically, benefits will start after you have been off work for 30 days and continue to be off for up to 12 months.

The insurance is provided by companies such as Norwich Union and Sun Alliance, but policies are usually sold through the post by banks and building societies.

Policies can also be purchased separately. Post Office Counters, for example, offers what it calls Bill Payment Cover Insurance. Three levels of monthly benefit are avail-

able: £250, £500 or £750. Premiums range from £6 to £18 per month for accident and sickness cover only, rising to £16.30 and £48.90 respectively.

These policies are cheaper, but they are not as comprehensive as permanent health insurance (PHI), which will pay a replacement income for an indefinite period if you are unable to work.

Matthew Wall finds bigger is safer in pharmaceuticals, a sector the British lead

Watch for the health warning



THE pharmaceuticals industry has long been viewed as the jewel in the crown of the British economy. But if investors swallow their pills without studying the labels, properly, they could well end up feeling ill.

This diverse sector encompasses globally successful giants such as Glaxo Wellcome, valued at nearly £36 billion, and volatile biotechnology minnows, such as Proteus, valued at just £30 million. Each end of the spectrum has its own risks and rewards.

The outlook for the big players is generally good. Glaxo, which bought Wellcome for £9.3 billion last year, is now the UK's largest quoted company. Interim pre-tax profits for the six months to June 30 weighed in at a hefty £1.6 billion, with earnings per share increasing 23 per cent compared with the same period last year.

SmithKline Beecham, the UK's second largest pharmaceuticals company valued at £22 billion, has just announced third-quarter pre-tax profits up 20 per cent to £374 million, boosted by buoyant sales in the United States.



The pharmaceuticals sector encompasses globally successful giants and volatile biotechnology minnows

Zeneca, the ICI spin-off, valued at £16.5 billion, is also performing well. Kevin Scotcher, pharmaceuticals analyst at NatWest Securities, says: "Zeneca may be low-ranked in the world in terms of drug market share, but it is in the top ten by market value and is growing faster than the rest of the sector. The share price has been driven up by constant takeover speculation and excitement over three new cancer drugs it is launching."

The big players have been working hard to compensate for heavy losses of sales when patents for some of their most

successful drugs begin expiring soon. So-called generic or unbranded drugs, made by rivals can cut sales of the original by more than half.

Two of Glaxo Wellcome's most successful drugs, Zantac and Zovirax, lose their patents in the US next year. Mr Scotcher believes that Glaxo has done enough to compensate for this.

He says: "Imminent drug launches by Glaxo will be significant. It has already launched five major new drugs in the US market over the last 18 months. Of those, Imigran, the anti-migraine

drug, is likely to be very successful, especially in the UK."

An increasingly competitive global market has forced 16 company mergers over the past two years as the industry, desperately seeks cost cuts to combat downward pressure on prices.

Despite this analysts believe double-digit volume growth is possible over the coming years as governments increasingly rely on effective drugs to keep the costs of state-provided healthcare down.

The biotechnology sector, led by the likes of British

Biotech, Celltech and Cortec, is not one for weak-hearted investors. These companies spend millions researching and developing what they hope will be the next highly lucrative wonder-drug. They are volatile, hard to value, and high risk.

The sector has seen £320 million of new money raised this year in a flurry of new issues and rights issues. However, since June, 25 per cent has been wiped off their value as the market has taken a more sanguine view of a sector particularly prone to rumour and hype.

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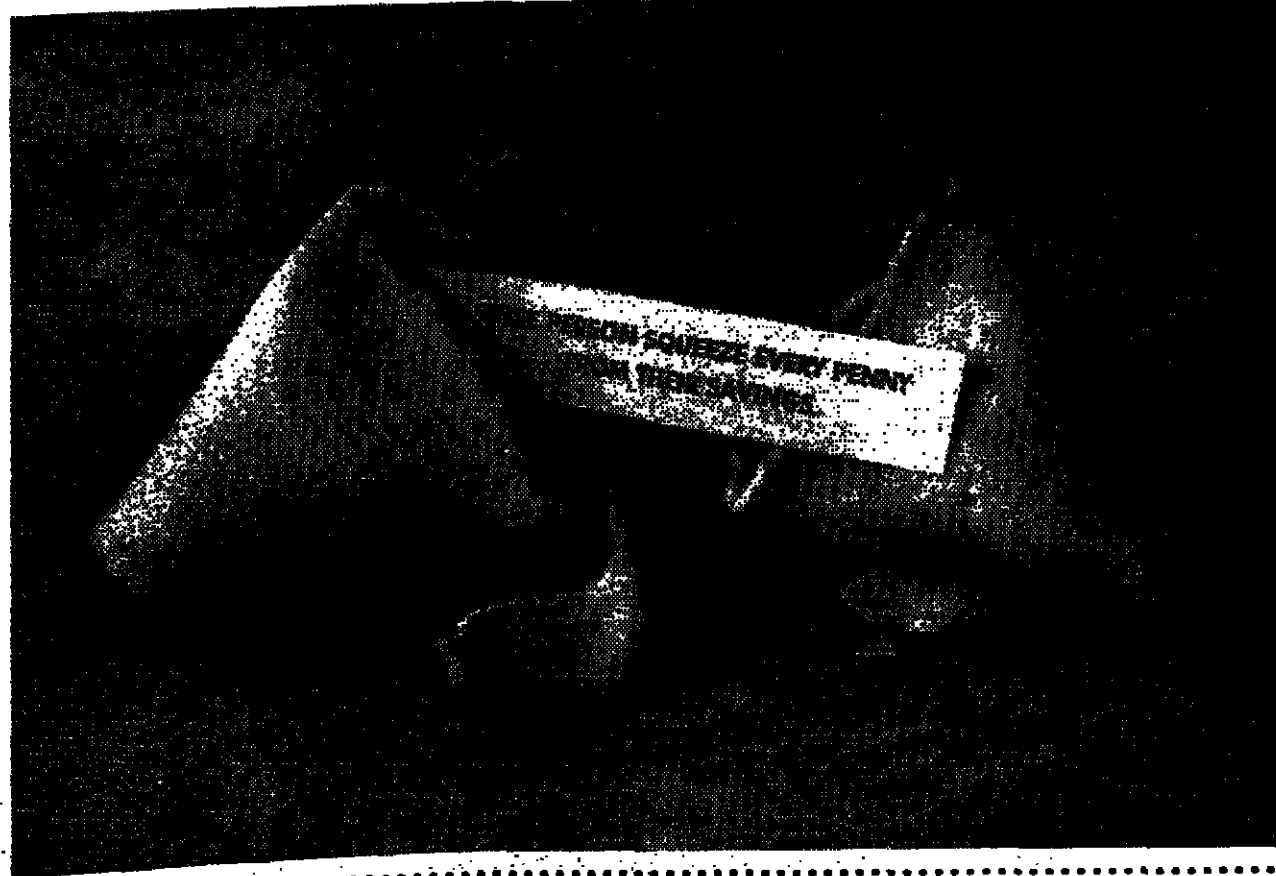
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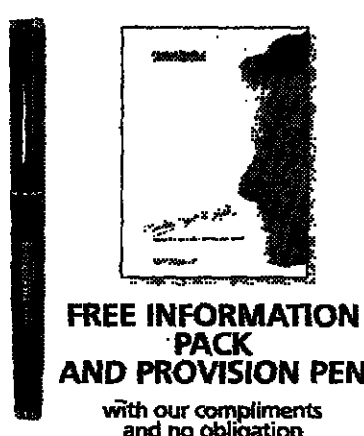
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Penalty hurdles for reluctant landlords

Making a casual inquiry to your mortgage lender about letting out your home could end up costing you hundreds of pounds - even if you do not go ahead. Some lenders impose draconian penalties - or at least threaten them - to any borrower who wants to let their property.

The wave of homeowners forced to become landlords by a combination of negative equity and changing personal circumstances may find their lender less than sympathetic to their plight. For example, HMC gives warning that anyone making an initial inquiry about letting risks being stung for an extra 2 per cent interest and higher insurance premiums.

Inquirers are told "Unless I receive a completed form from you within 14 days or hear that you have decided not to go ahead [with letting], I will have to assume that you are letting the property without our permission" - and may penalise you accordingly. Such an

Fiona Bawdon gives a warning to negative equity sufferers who are thinking of letting their homes

official response is not untypical, said Patrick Buntin, manager at London and Country, the mortgage broker.

Quite simply lenders in the main do not want this kind of business and so hope to scare off people by imposing punitive interest rates, typically 1 per cent above base rate, processing fees, sometimes of several hundred pounds, and stringent conditions before they will agree to the arrangement. Conditions may include limitations on the length of letting period; making it compulsory to use a firm of agents to manage the property; and insisting the property be let for reasons of "necessity not convenience". Of course, one man's necessity is another man's convenience. The problem for borrowers is they have

no way of knowing how strict an interpretation will be applied by their lender.

Mr Buntin said most lenders' bark is worse than their bite. However intimidating the standard initial response, in reality, most are sympathetic to borrowers with genuine reasons for wanting to let their homes. Processing fees and extra interest charges may sometimes be waived once the situation is explained, he said.

He added that it is understandable for lenders to want the discretion to charge more the risk of bad debts on rented out properties is far higher. "If you have two mortgages, one of which is on the property where you are living and you lose your job, which mortgage are you going to pay first?" Lenders are also determined

Warning for new wave of landlords

Sara McConnell gives the letting market home to many problems

A...

not to fuel another property boom by encouraging people to buy property on a speculative basis - a particular danger at the moment when prices and interest rates are low. They are therefore keen to weed out those wanting to let for investment reasons from those whose circumstances have genuinely changed. Sadly many lenders do not communicate the legitimate concerns that lie behind their otherwise inexplicably hostile response.



Paying the penalty: homeowners who want to let their homes face more than a parking fine

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OFFT 44

Sara McConnell finds the answer to confusion over the breakdown of a pension

Thrift versus good times: the reader's situation of friends, one working, one relying on the State, mirrors the comedy programme *Sometime Never*

Is £2 a week all I will get?

If you want to find out how much state pension you will receive when you retire, the Benefits Agency in Newcastle will send you a breakdown. But making sense of it is another thing, a Weekend Money reader says. She writes: "I am a widow coming up to retirement and I wrote to the Benefits Agency for an assessment of my state pension. I have worked all my adult life with no time off for children and I have always paid my own class 1 national insurance stamp in the belief I would get a better pension by doing so. I have also paid into my employer's fund. The assessment is as follows:

Basic pension - £61.15
Additional pension based on earnings - £79.59
Deduction for being in an employer's scheme - £55.88
Remaining additional pension - £23.71
Graduated retirement benefit - £5.40
Total - £90.26

Why am I being penalised by having £55.88 deducted from my additional pension because I had an employer's pension? I was being careful and making best possible provision for my old age. A friend, also widowed and now retired, who worked on and off

over the years, did not pay her own contributions but relied on a pension from her husband's contributions. She now gets £88 a week state pension. In other words I have wasted an awful lot of money over the years paying it to the Government and all I get for my efforts is £2 a week more than someone who did not pay any contributions of her own."

Weekend Money replies: "Even the Benefits Agency admits there are 'some tricky bits to get over' in unravelling this one. But you will be pleased to know that the crux of its explanation is that you have not lost the £55.88 that was deducted from your additional pension. This pension will be paid to you as part of your teacher's pension rather than from the State. This will give you a total of at least £146.14 a week.

Your pension is made up of three parts. You have that from your employer plus a basic state pension of £61.15 a week, the maximum for a single person who has worked all his or her life and built up the required number of class 1 national insurance contributions as you have. On top of this you have earned additional state pension based on earnings.

The additional pension system changed in 1975 when the then Labour Government introduced the State Earnings Related Pension Scheme (Serps) to replace Graduated Retirement Benefit (GRB). You were working before 1975, you have both GRB and Serps (additional pension).

You build up additional pension via national insurance contributions, with a proportion of your NI contribution going into the state pension fund. But many employers opt to contract out of the additional pension system and your employer is one. You pay lower national insurance contributions, while your employer has to guarantee to pay you what you would have got from the State. This payment is the minimum pension your employer can pay you and he pays this part of your pension, not the State. The reason why it appears as a deduction on your pension projection is that you build up additional pension via your national insurance contributions in the same way regardless of whether your employer is contracted out. At retirement, if your employer is contracted out, the amount it pays you in additional pension is deducted from the total you built up.



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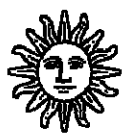
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WEEKEND MONEY LETTERS

Options for the board would dilute the value of every ordinary Norwich Union member's shareholding

From Mr J. Brister.
Sir, In his letter (Unconvinced about the benefits to members of Norwich Union flotation, Weekend Money, October 19), Brian Rees expresses misgivings regarding Norwich Union's proposed demutualisation. Having had a long and, except in regard to my involvement in the redundancies of the early Nineties, happy career without regrets with Norwich Union, I, too, have a misgiving.

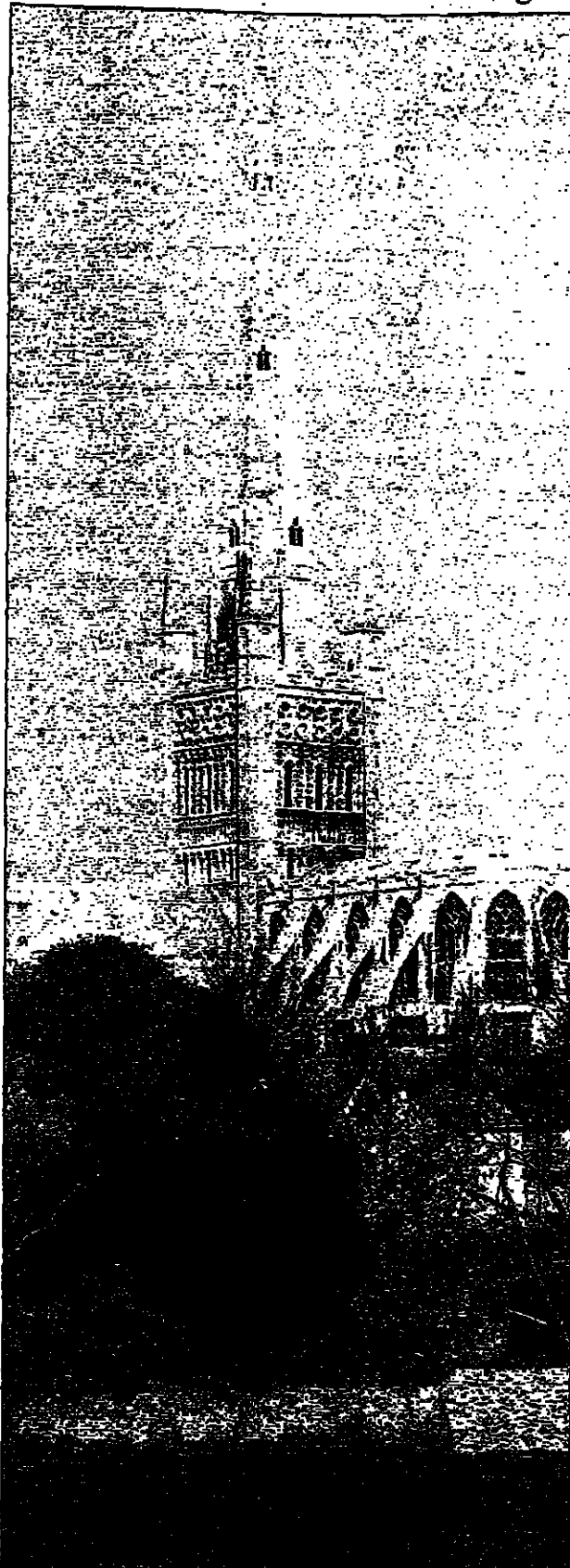
While Brian Rees's concerns may in some respects be met when the full case is presented to those policyholders who, under the Articles and Memorandum are entitled to vote, the issue of share options is of concern. The value of a company in which share options are available does not change as a result of an option being exercised. How, then, does the option have any value? It comes, of course, from the corresponding fall in the value of the remaining shareholders' shares.

The justification for these options has always been thin and usually based on the need to attract and retain top managers. In recent years, and while redundancies have been declared at all levels, Norwich Union has had little or no difficulty in hiring staff from ples.

Two of the present executive directors have been recruited in this way, as have been top managers in fund management, healthcare, personnel and information technology, providing conclusive proof that Norwich Union's pay and conditions are eminently suitable for a plc. What, then, could be the justification for these options? I suggest that before any Norwich Union policyholder votes in favour of demutualisation, they demand a comprehensive answer to that question and an assurance that neither at the outset nor at a later date would such a move be made.

It would ill behove such a long established company built on mutual principles to taint its demutualisation proposals with what I regard as the unfair practice of allocating share options to top managers.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN BRISTER,
14 Wentworth Green,
Norwich.



Air of solidity: Norwich Cathedral — symbol of Norwich Union

Penalties for the taxman?

From Mrs J.W. Poole
Sir, In your recent article on self-assessment for income tax (Facing up to a critical self-assessment, Weekend Money Tax and Financial Planning Guide, October 19) you remind readers of the draconian penalties that will be levied upon the taxpayer who sends in his tax return late.

I returned my completed form for 1995-96 together with dividend vouchers etc, with an application for a refund of tax, by recorded delivery, on April 30. Royal Mail confirmed it was delivered to Cardiff Tax Office on May 2.

On September 20 (in response to an inquiry I made six weeks earlier) I was advised that my return had not been received. I still await the duplicate which was not sent with the reply to my letter.

In the self-assessment legislation is there any protection for the taxpayer from Revenue's inefficiencies?

Yours faithfully,
J. POOLE,
332 Knightsfield,
Welwyn Garden City, Herts.

IFA — not salesman

From Mr K.P. Mitchell
Sir, Mr Sutton (Commission ensures that independent financial advisers are "salesmen" too, Weekend Money Letters, October 19) is quite incorrect: most independent financial advisers are more than happy to work for a fee instead of commission. In the unusual event that his adviser will not work on a fee basis, Money Management magazine or the Institute of Financial Planning will put him in touch with a fee-based adviser.

By charging fees, IFAs are paid by clients for their expertise, rather than having to rely on policy sales for income. However, most potential clients still balk at the idea of paying a fee, usually claiming that they must first consult their spouse before a decision, and are never heard of again. The word "client" is, in this respect, misleading and the IFA should bear this in mind.

Yours faithfully,
KEITH MITCHELL,
Alexanders Independent Financial Advisers,
3 Temple Chambers,
Temple Street,
Swindon, Wiltshire.

First-named are enablers, not owners of society accounts for the disabled

From Mrs K. Gossage.
Sir, Had the building societies understood the position of the first-named person vis-a-vis the disabled person, the current situation would, I feel sure, not have arisen (Fight for bonuses continues, Weekend Money Letters, October 26).

The first-named person is simply an enabler who makes it possible for the disabled person to have an account, in the same way as a translator makes a speech accessible to an audience who speak a different language. The money in the account belongs to the disabled person, who is therefore the de facto member of the so-

ciet. Understanding this, it is inconceivable that the chief executives of the societies having ultimate responsibility for the interests of all their members, will not now wish to explore every possible way to avoid the great wrong which they are set to inflict on thousands of their members.

Yours faithfully,
KRZYSIA GOSSAGE,
Little Brays,
Kingston St.,
Chinnor, Oxon.

From Wing Commander R. Dauncey.

Sir, I am amazed that the building societies have not yet

sorted out the problem of accounts in "more than one name". When Abbey National went public, power of attorney was recorded in pass books in the form: "Richard Dauncey, Power of Attorney for Dorothy Dauncey" in the normal space for name and address of holder. Despite the legal status of power of attorney, they would not accept that Dorothy Dauncey, my cousin, was entitled to bonus shares. This was because I too held an Abbey National account. Legal advice was cited and it took them 18 months to admit their error and pay Miss Dauncey the market value of

the shares, interest foregone and expenses incurred. The Abbey National now logically record power of attorney in a separate space inside the front cover. Why can't all societies do the same?

Yours faithfully,
RICHARD DAUNCEY,
Leremoos, 34 Main Road,
Naphill, High Wycombe.

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RUGBY LEAGUE

Tour culminates in farce as Britain are whitewashed

New Zealand 32
Great Britain 12

FROM CHRISTOPHER IRVINE
IN CHRISTCHURCH

IGNOMINY was heaped on the agency of two narrow defeats in this miserable reminder of the last time New Zealand whitewashed Great Britain. They equalled their highest score against the Lions, which was set during their 3-0 series win in 1904.

Farce, which has accompanied the New Zealand leg of the tour, was there to its bitter end at Lancaster Park yesterday. Daryl Powell's 31st and last appearance for Britain was unceremoniously ended in a sending-off for verbal abuse of the referee. Powell thought he had only been silenced, and thus the shortest retirement in international history concluded in him playing the last minute without Steven Clark, the referee, noting Britain were back up to a full complement. Clark's report to a New Zealand Rugby League inquiry should make interesting reading.

Not that it made any difference. Matthew Ridge had weaved his way beneath the posts for New Zealand's sixth try. The swaggering captain

WHO would have thought that men who spend their working lives fighting the evils of drug trafficking could be thrown into a tizzy by anything as trivial as a mere game? Hardly seems likely, does it?

However, a quick look at the faces of the winning team in the Northern Home Counties regional final of *The Times* MeesPierson Corporate Golf Challenge at Mentmore yesterday would have proved that they were undergoing all sorts



of torture before their victory was confirmed.

The competition, the last in the 12-event regional final series that has been taking place throughout the length and breadth of the country in the past four weeks, was won by the National Investigation Service of HM Customs and Excise with a score of 90 Stableford points.

They were three ahead of Tullett and Tokyo Forest International, who were level on points with Whitbread plc, but beat them into third place after a countback of the last nine holes.

The Customs team of Malcolm Woodall, Colin Tennant, John Nicholson and Colin Shaw marked themselves out



Kendrick Rhodes, of Commercial Union Assurance, plays to the 10th green at Mentmore yesterday

as a quartet to be watched closely when they went through the turn with 49 points.

Included in that tally were two seven-point scores, the first of which came on the 4th after two sixes and a five in the first three holes.

Woodall, whose 23 handicaps gave him two shots on the par-five hole, hit the green with a five-wood, then two punts from 15 feet gave him a net three and four points. Nicholson had a net birdie four and three points.

The second seven-pointer came on the 8th, where Nicholson had a net birdie for three points and Woodall rammed in a six-footer for a net eagle and four points.

The team wobbled more than somewhat on the inward nine, and they thought they were out of it when they scored only 41 points. But with the conditions becoming more testing as the day went on, they had done enough on the front half to claim a momentous victory. "We're immensely relieved, but also a little bit surprised," Nicholson said.

Finally, a small story of ambition thwarted. David Pratt, a former county cricketer, tried his level best to delay a heart bypass operation to play in the Osborne, Morris and Morgan team. Despite his entreaties, his consultant insisted that Pratt should go under the knife.

The operation was performed on the reluctant patient on October 17 and was a complete success. That a recovered but still frustrated Pratt wanted to put golf before

COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE TO THE WEEKEND FIXTURES

FOOTBALL									
Kick-off 3.0 unless stated									
Pools coupon numbers in brackets									
FA Caring Premiership									
(1) Aston Villa v Nottingham Forest	(2) Derby v Leicester	(3) Leeds v Sunderland	(4) Manchester United v Chelsea	(5) Sheffield Wed v Southampton	(6) Norwich v West Ham	(7) Wimbledon v Arsenal	(8) Bolton v Huddersfield	(9) Bradford v Oldham	(10) Northampton v Ipswich
(11) Oxford v Notts	(12) Port Vale v Birmingham	(13) Southend v Reading	(14) Stockport v Rochdale	(15) Torquay v Exeter	(16) Walsley v Barnsley	(17) Walsley v Barnsley	(18) Walsley v Barnsley	(19) Walsley v Barnsley	(20) Walsley v Barnsley
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RACING

Cup pressure catching up with Lehane

FROM RICHARD EVANS IN MELBOURNE

OLIVER LEHANE, the owner of the Melbourne Cup favourite, Oscar Schindler, knows a thing or two about having a flutter. After all, he made enough out of slot machines and amusement arcades in Dublin to retire 15 years ago at the age of 38.

But as Australia's most famous race edges closer, the gambler of a life is taking its toll. Lehane has invested £70,000 in getting the Irish St Leger winner and his entourage to Australia in the hope of scooping around £700,000 in prize money. And the strain is beginning to tell.

By his own admission, he is feeling "edgy" and looks it. The strict laws governing smoking in public places are making matters worse and the race on Tuesday can hardly come soon enough. Fortunately, the pressure cooker atmosphere appears not to have affected his horse.



Lehane gamble

"It's so good, it is frightening. There has been absolutely no hiccup. He travels well, he's eaten up, drunk plenty and looks magnificent. He's awfully fresh. The only downside is that we were told there would be a swimming facility for the horse and there isn't," he said yesterday.

Nevertheless, he hopes the absence of a few lengths in the pool will not be reflected in lengths between horses at Flemington racecourse.

Optimistic talk, but we've heard it before. Quick Ransom and Double Trigger were reportedly "spot on" for the Cup before flopping disastrously. "Horses down here are only starting to get their summer coats. Horses in Ireland and England are getting their winter coats. It must be a severe test of their metabolism. It is going against nature," Lehane admitted.

Mark Read, the largest independent bookmaker in Australia, clearly agrees. Despite laying some chunky six-figure bets recently, he has knocked the Irish raider out to 7-2 and believes he will go off at 5-1 or even 8-1 on the tote. "He has

travelled across three continents and is an entire while Vintage Crop was a very laid back gelding. There is a severe doubt about him getting two miles and I want to lay him."

More pressure for Lehane. "I asked that question to Kevin Prendergast umpteen times and there is no doubt about the horse staying. He won over 14 furlongs in the Irish St Leger at the Curragh, which is a tough track. The ground will make no difference to him. It was rock hard in the King George and very fast in the Hardwicke Stakes."

He believes Oscar Schindler faces three main rivals - Saintly, trained by the legendary Bart Cummings, Senator, a New Zealand import, and

WOLVERHAMPTON

THUNDERER
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12.40 JAMES HIGGINS CONDITIONAL JOCKEYS HANDICAP HURDLE (22.175; 2m) (13 runners)

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12 2221 STAY WITH ME 9 (P) 9 C. G. 12-0-0 M. Newman
13 2221 STAY WITH ME 9 (P) 9 C. G. 12-0-0 M. Newman

1.10 ARNOLD LODGE SCHOOL HANDICAP CHASE (23.045; 2m) (4)

1 1151 PEARL BAY 9 (P) 9 C. G. 12-0-0 G. Hogan
2 2221 STAY WITH ME 9 (P) 9 C. G. 12-0-0 M. Newman
3 2221 STAY WITH ME 9 (P) 9 C. G. 12-0-0 M. Newman
4 2221 STAY WITH ME 9 (P) 9 C. G. 12-0-0 M. Newman

1.40 BSPH HANDICAP CHASE (24.692; 3m 2m) (4)

1 1151 PEARL BAY 9 (P) 9 C. G. 12-0-0 G. Hogan
2 2221 STAY WITH ME 9 (P) 9 C. G. 12-0-0 M. Newman
3 2221 STAY WITH ME 9 (P) 9 C. G. 12-0-0 M. Newman
4 2221 STAY WITH ME 9 (P) 9 C. G. 12-0-0 M. Newman

2.15 TENSATOR HANDICAP HURDLE (23.600; 2m) (5)

1 1151 PEARL BAY 9 (P) 9 C. G. 12-0-0 G. Hogan
2 2221 STAY WITH ME 9 (P) 9 C. G. 12-0-0 M. Newman
3 2221 STAY WITH ME 9 (P) 9 C. G. 12-0-0 M. Newman
4 2221 STAY WITH ME 9 (P) 9 C. G. 12-0-0 M. Newman
5 2221 STAY WITH ME 9 (P) 9 C. G. 12-0-0 M. Newman

2.45 ST MARY'S JUVENILE NOVICES SELLING HURDLE (21.591; 2m) (10)

1 1151 PEARL BAY 9 (P) 9 C. G. 12-0-0 G. Hogan
2 2221 STAY WITH ME 9 (P) 9 C. G. 12-0-0 M. Newman
3 2221 STAY WITH ME 9 (P) 9 C. G. 12-0-0 M. Newman
4 2221 STAY WITH ME 9 (P) 9 C. G. 12-0-0 M. Newman
5 2221 STAY WITH ME 9 (P) 9 C. G. 12-0-0 M. Newman

3.20 OFFCHURCH NOVICES CHASE (23.795; 2m 4f 110yd) (5)

1 1151 PEARL BAY 9 (P) 9 C. G. 12-0-0 G. Hogan
2 2221 STAY WITH ME 9 (P) 9 C. G. 12-0-0 M. Newman
3 2221 STAY WITH ME 9 (P) 9 C. G. 12-0-0 M. Newman
4 2221 STAY WITH ME 9 (P) 9 C. G. 12-0-0 M. Newman
5 2221 STAY WITH ME 9 (P) 9 C. G. 12-0-0 M. Newman

3.55 WEATHERBY'S STARS OF TOMORROW NATIONAL HUNT FLAT RACE (21.364; 2m) (7)

1 1151 PEARL BAY 9 (P) 9 C. G. 12-0-0 G. Hogan
2 2221 STAY WITH ME 9 (P) 9 C. G. 12-0-0 M. Newman
3 2221 STAY WITH ME 9 (P) 9 C. G. 12-0-0 M. Newman
4 2221 STAY WITH ME 9 (P) 9 C. G. 12-0-0 M. Newman
5 2221 STAY WITH ME 9 (P) 9 C. G. 12-0-0 M. Newman

4.00 LEVY BOARD CONDITIONAL JOCKEYS HANDICAP HURDLE (22.220; 2m 110yd) (9)

1 1151 PEARL BAY 9 (P) 9 C. G. 12-0-0 G. Hogan
2 2221 STAY WITH ME 9 (P) 9 C. G. 12-0-0 M. Newman
3 2221 STAY WITH ME 9 (P) 9 C. G. 12-0-0 M. Newman
4 2221 STAY WITH ME 9 (P) 9 C. G. 12-0-0 M. Newman
5 2221 STAY WITH ME 9 (P) 9 C. G. 12-0-0 M. Newman

WOLVERHAMPTON

THUNDERER
7.00 Harley, 7.30 Mad Militant, 8.00 Two To Tango, 8.30 Jimmy The Stunt, 8.00 Jingoist, 9.30 Disco Boy.

GOING: STANDARD DRAW: NO ADVANTAGE

7.00 PENDEFORD MAIDEN (23.184; 6f) (13 runners)

1 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
2 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
3 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
4 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
5 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
6 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
7 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
8 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
9 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
10 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
11 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
12 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
13 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown

7.30 SUFFOLK CLAIMER (22.243; 1m 4f) (12)

1 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
2 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
3 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
4 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
5 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
6 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
7 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
8 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
9 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
10 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
11 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
12 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown

8.00 CHARLOTTE MAIDEN (22.950; 1m 4f) (13)

1 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
2 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
3 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
4 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
5 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
6 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
7 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
8 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
9 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
10 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
11 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
12 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
13 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown

8.30 CASTLECROFT HANDICAP (23.210; 7f) (12)

1 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
2 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
3 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
4 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
5 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
6 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
7 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
8 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
9 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
10 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
11 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
12 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown

9.00 MIDLAND BAR SELLING NURSERY HANDICAP (22.0; 2m) (13)

1 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
2 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
3 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
4 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
5 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
6 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
7 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
8 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
9 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
10 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
11 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
12 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
13 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown

9.30 W MIDLANDS HANDICAP (22.208; 6f) (13)

1 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
2 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
3 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
4 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
5 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
6 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
7 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
8 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
9 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
10 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
11 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
12 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
13 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown

Danoli makes safe landing

PHILIP FENTON, the former British amateur champion, substituted successfully for Tom Treacy as Danoli thrilled a large crowd at Clonmel with a winning first appearance over fences yesterday.

Tom Foley, Danoli's trainer, was on the point of withdrawing his charge after Treacy had broken a collar-bone in the opening maiden hurdle. However, Foley turned to Fenton after Charlie Swan, the Irish champion jockey, had refused to desert the eventual runner-up, Consharon.

Fenton, who has schooled most of Edward O'Grady's good horses in recent years, got on well with the headstrong Danoli, whom he managed to hold up in mid-division until the final mile of the London Heathrow Captain Christy Beginners' Chase. Joining Consharon in the lead after four out, Danoli, a 5-4 on chance, was sent clear going to the second last and safely cleared the remaining two downhill fences to come home a six-length winner.

Next stop for Danoli could be Naas before his first serious test over fences in the Chiquita Drinmore Chase at Fairyhouse in a month's time. "Danoli took to the fences as well as I had expected and I am happy that we have this first one out of the way without any real problems," Foley said.

"We will take it one step at a time. Although he is entered in the Hutton Grace Hurdle, now that he has shown he is a chaser we will probably stick at that," the trainer added.

"It was a tough task for Philip, who had never sat on the horse before, but I couldn't be happier with the way the man went about the job, giving Danoli plenty of light at the fences," Foley said.

Coral reacted to Danoli's successful steeplechasing debut by cutting his odds for next year's Cheltenham Gold Cup to 20-1 from 33-1. Coral's Gold Cup betting reads: 7-2 Imperial Call, 10-1 Rough Guide, 14-1 Nahleth Land, 14-1 One Man, 16-1 others.

KELSO

THUNDERER
1.00 Scrooby View, 1.30 Antarctic Wind, 2.00 Prince Skyrub, 2.30 Astral Weeks, 3.00 Celtic Silver, 3.30 Nicholas Plant, 4.00 Eden Dancer.

GOING: GOOD (GOOD TO FIRM IN PLACES) SIS

1.00 ISLE OF SKYE BLENDED SCOTCH WHISKY NOVICES HANDICAP CHASE (22.944; 3m 11f) (10 runners)

1 3321 SCROOBY VIEW 21 (P) 9 C. G. 12-0-0 R. Scully
2 3321 SCROOBY VIEW 21 (P) 9 C. G. 12-0-0 R. Scully
3 3321 SCROOBY VIEW 21 (P) 9 C. G. 12-0-0 R. Scully
4 3321 SCROOBY VIEW 21 (P) 9 C. G. 12-0-0 R. Scully
5 3321 SCROOBY VIEW 21 (P) 9 C. G. 12-0-0 R. Scully
6 3321 SCROOBY VIEW 21 (P) 9 C. G. 12-0-0 R. Scully
7 3321 SCROOBY VIEW 21 (P) 9 C. G. 12-0-0 R. Scully
8 3321 SCROOBY VIEW 21 (P) 9 C. G. 12-0-0 R. Scully
9 3321 SCROOBY VIEW 21 (P) 9 C. G. 12-0-0 R. Scully
10 3321 SCROOBY VIEW 21 (P) 9 C. G. 12-0-0 R. Scully

1.30 ROSALIND BIRTHDAY NATIONAL HUNT NOVICES HURDLE (22.762; 2m 6f 110yd) (10)

1 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
2 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
3 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
4 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
5 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
6 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
7 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
8 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
9 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
10 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown

2.00 NEWTON INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT HANDICAP CHASE (23.007; 2m 11f) (5)

1 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
2 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
3 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
4 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
5 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown

2.30 HARROW HOTEL (DALKETH) NOVICES SELLING HURDLE (22.316; 2m 110yd) (12)

1 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
2 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
3 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
4 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
5 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
6 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
7 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
8 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
9 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
10 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
11 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
12 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown

3.00 SALVESON FOOD SERVICES HANDICAP CHASE (25.183; 2m 6f 110yd) (9)

1 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
2 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
3 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
4 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
5 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
6 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
7 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
8 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
9 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown

3.30 OOH AAR DAILY STAR HANDICAP HURDLE (23.380; 2m 6f 110yd) (8)

1 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
2 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
3 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
4 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
5 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
6 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
7 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
8 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown

4.00 LEVY BOARD CONDITIONAL JOCKEYS HANDICAP HURDLE (22.220; 2m 110yd) (9)

1 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
2 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
3 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
4 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
5 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
6 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
7 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
8 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
9 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown

4.30 LEVY BOARD CONDITIONAL JOCKEYS HANDICAP HURDLE (22.220; 2m 110yd) (9)

1 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
2 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
3 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
4 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
5 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
6 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
7 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
8 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
9 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown

4.00 LEVY BOARD CONDITIONAL JOCKEYS HANDICAP HURDLE (22.220; 2m 110yd) (9)

1 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
2 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
3 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
4 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
5 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
6 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
7 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
8 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
9 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown

4.00 LEVY BOARD CONDITIONAL JOCKEYS HANDICAP HURDLE (22.220; 2m 110yd) (9)

1 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
2 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
3 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
4 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
5 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
6 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
7 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
8 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
9 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown

4.00 LEVY BOARD CONDITIONAL JOCKEYS HANDICAP HURDLE (22.220; 2m 110yd) (9)

1 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
2 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
3 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
4 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
5 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
6 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
7 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
8 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
9 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown

4.00 LEVY BOARD CONDITIONAL JOCKEYS HANDICAP HURDLE (22.220; 2m 110yd) (9)

1 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
2 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
3 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
4 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
5 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
6 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
7 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
8 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown
9 04 AGENT MAIDEN 31 F. 2-0-0 A. McKeown

COURSE SPECIALISTS

Kelso
TRAINERS: Mrs M. Reveley, 32 winners from 108 runners, 42.6%; Mrs J. Gosnell, 27 from 108, 24.8%; C. Sherwood, 8 from 36, 22.2%; N. Bailey, 5 from 30, 16.7%; C. Brooks, 3 from 21, 14.3%; R. Hodges, 3 from 21, 14.3%; M. Prescott, 18 from 77, 23.4%.

Warwick
JOCKEYS: P. Niven, 44 winners from 115 rides, 38.2%; M. Mooney, 13 from 59, 22.0%; C. Callaghan, 10 from 48, 20.8%; A. Dobbin, 25 from 125, 20.0%.

Wolverhampton
TRAINERS: D. Lodge, 6 winners from 16 runners, 37.5%; M. Papp, 27 from 108, 24.8%; J. Gosnell, 8 from 36, 22.2%; N. Bailey, 5 from 30, 16.7%; C. Brooks, 3 from 21, 14.3%; R. Hodges, 3 from 21, 14.3%; M. Prescott, 18 from 77, 23.4%.

Wolverhampton
JOCKEYS: P. Niven, 44 winners from 115 rides, 38.2%; M. Mooney, 13 from 59, 22.0%; C. Callaghan, 10 from 48, 20.8%; A. Dobbin, 25 from 125, 20.0%.

Wolverhampton
JOCKEYS: P. Niven, 44 winners from 115 rides, 38.2%; M. Mooney, 13 from 59, 22.0%; C. Callaghan, 10 from 48, 20.8%; A. Dobbin, 25 from 125, 20.0%.

Wolverhampton
JOCKEYS: P. Niven, 44 winners from 115 rides, 38.2%; M. Mooney, 13 from 59, 22.0%; C. Callaghan, 10 from 48, 20.8%; A. Dobbin, 25 from 125, 20.0%.

Wolverhampton
JOCKEYS: P. Niven, 44 winners from 115 rides, 38.2%; M. Mooney, 13 from 59, 22.0%; C. Callaghan, 10 from 48, 20.8%; A. Dobbin, 25 from 125, 20.0%.

Wolverhampton
JOCKEYS: P. Niven, 44 winners from 115 rides, 38.2%; M. Mooney, 13 from 59, 22.0%; C. Callaghan, 10 from 48, 20.8%; A. Dobbin, 25 from 125, 20.0%.

Wolverhampton
JOCKEYS: P. Niven, 44 winners from 115 rides, 38.2%; M. Mooney, 13 from 59, 22.0%; C. Callaghan, 10 from 48, 20.8%; A. Dobbin, 25 from 125, 20.0%.

Wolverhampton
JOCKEYS: P. Niven, 44 winners from 115 rides, 38.2%; M. Mooney, 13 from 59, 22.0%; C. Callaghan, 10 from 48, 20.8%; A. Dobbin, 25 from 125, 20.0%.

Wolverhampton
JOCKEYS: P. Niven, 44 winners from 115 rides, 38.2%; M. Mooney, 13 from 59, 22.0%; C. Callaghan, 10 from 48, 20.8%; A. Dobbin, 25 from 125, 20.0%.

Wolverhampton
JOCKEYS: P. Niven, 44 winners from 115 rides, 38.2%; M. Mooney, 13 from 59, 22.0%; C. Callaghan, 10 from 48, 20.8%; A. Dobbin, 25 from 125, 20.0%.

FOOTBALL

Robson's foreign policy shifts to stronger defence

THE virtues of being English seem to be waning in the managerial eyes of Bryan Robson. This week he sold Nicky Barry to finance new defenders and promptly went scouting in Italy.

Robson, the epitome of the Englishman at play — hard-working, hard-tackling and unbreakable of spirit — was, less than a year ago, invited to follow Terry Venables as England coach. He felt he was too young, but nevertheless continued to assist Venables up to the end of the European championship three months ago. Yet look at Robson's revolution at Middlesbrough today.

His midfield is governed by the Brazilian, Emerson (€4 million). His attack is led by Fabrizio Ravanelli (€7 million), who has already scored 13 goals. And Ravanelli is supported by Juninho (€4.5 million), another Brazilian. Robson can also call on the Dane, Mikkel Beck.

However, it is in defence where Middlesbrough are all-England. Yesterday there was speculation that Robson is about to spend £2 million of the Barry money on the Rangers defender, Dave Robertson. But his assistant, Viv Anderson, and reserve-team coach,

Rob Hughes on the manager who has lost faith in the English virtues he once embodied

Gordon McQueen, last weekend watched Parma play Internazionale, watched specifically Luigi Apolloni, who, together with Lorenzo Menotti, would be sold by Parma for £3 million. Robson was in Turin on Wednesday, casting covetous eyes over the Juventus' defenders, even though he has been told Juventus will release no one while their European Cup campaign continues.

All of this begs the question as to whether Robson has any belief left in English players, or at least those who might fit his purse. Two years ago he took a young, slightly overweight and impetuous midfielder player, Jamie Pollock, under his wing. "Turning Jamie into an international would be really satisfying," Robson observed. "I really enjoy coaching him." He really enjoyed taking Barry from Tottenham Hotspur, too.

Now both the young midfielder apprentice and the England squad attacker are gone from the Riverside Stadium. It is not a complete capitulation,

as the England Under-21 squad, named yesterday, included Phil Stamp, 20, the competitive Middlesbrough midfielder. But Robson, like any other manager, has a first duty to win football matches. And, in his case, a commitment to raising the technical standard of the team in his care. With £25 million at his disposal, Barry had been the one English player of any standing Robson purchased, and now he has been off-loaded, officially because he and Juninho duplicate one another playing off the shoulder of Ravanelli.

Ravanelli took the opportunity, while back on Italian soil last month, to pronounce that Middlesbrough, and any other ambitious English club, should observe the defenders in Serie A. He has talked, often, to Robson about this. Ravanelli has doubtless marked his manager's card about defenders. He found most difficult and, under the present climate of financial accountability in Italy, even the leading clubs appear to be willing to consider cash deals for high-quality players.

In England, even if such a versatile and dependable defender as Ferrara existed, his price would be double that in Italy. The reasoning over there is that, after Bosman, any player nearing the end of a contract, is worth next to nothing. It is a quick fix, a novel one, for English clubs to go shopping in Milan, Parma or Turin, but disturbing that Robson, with all his associations with the English game, should need virtually to build an entire team on alien strengths.

Yesterday Branco, the Brazilian he hired and swiftly released, repeated what was being said a year ago: "Bryan Robson is a fine man, a really good coach, and he will one day coach the England side." Then he really will have to put his faith in English virtues.

Vieira making a smooth transition

THE FACE OF FOOTBALL

Brian Glanville on the maturity and resilience of young Highbury import

Patrick Vieira is picking up the pace. Those who thought he might not do so are being made to think again. Willingly, in my case, for Vieira, Arsenal's French midfielder player from Senegal, is a charming and persuasive young man.

Philosophical, too. His experience last season with AC Milan — when they bought him from Cannes, they were expected to send him out on loan. He kept him instead, and gave him just a handful of games — might have broken the spirit of a less resilient young man.

"It was an experience I wanted very much," he said. "If it was to be done again, I would do it again." As for his various translocations, from France to Italy to England, in so short a time, he said: "It's the same game. If you score more goals, you win the match. It's the mentality which changes."

It was very early in Arsenal's game against Leeds United at Highbury last Saturday that Vieira implicitly answered his doubters. Picking up the ball from a throw-in, some 40 yards from the Leeds goal, he set out on a sustained, mesmerising run, stepping past Ford, gliding past Beesley, finding himself well placed for a shot at goal only, unselfishly, to roll the ball to Lee Dixon, whose shot rocketed into the net.

Arsène Wenger, who recommended that Arsenal pay £3.5 million for Vieira, believes that he is now getting into his stride, as he achieves fitness. In Wenger's view he will get fitter still. No doubt Wenger's own, intensive training will expedite the process.

For weeks after his London



Vieira is now getting into his stride and answering the doubters

arrival, Vieira was ruled out by injury. When he did come on for his first-team debut, as a substitute at Highbury against Sheffield Wednesday, his cool, refined technique and deft use of the ball suggested that he could revitalise Arsenal's pedestrian midfield. But in Cologne, against Borussia Mönchengladbach in a UEFA Cup first-round, second-leg match which he had said was "not mission impossible", he looked like a lost soul. Three days later at Highbury, against a Sunderland side reduced to nine men, his performance was laborious.

Certainly, he must now carry a large burden in the Arsenal midfield, unless David Platt can finally regain his old, full fitness. But Vieira, as the late Raymond Chandler could have it, is no paper flower. In last week's Coca-Cola Cup third-round tie away to Stoke City, there were those who thought he might have been sent off. English referees, as usual, have started the season like lions, and metamorphosed into lambs.

Vieira is the son of a marvellous mother, who brought him to France from Senegal when he was seven and his brother eight. She still

got up each morning at 4.30 to work in the Cuisines Generales at Versailles, and rarely, if ever, went to watch him play because she was shy and preferred to see his games on television, exclaiming: "No, Patrick, don't do it!" when he went into a tackle. As well he did not heed her advice in boyhood: "Don't wear yourself out. You'll never be a footballer!" For her son, she says: "It is Christmas all the year round; he is forever buying gifts for his nephews and nieces."

His mother went with him to Milan; she has not come to England. Nor has his brother.

to whom he has always been very close. At Milan, he delighted in the company of such as Franco Baresi and those other two stars of African origin, George Weah, from Liberia, and Marcel Desailly, who, though a France international, was born in Ghana.

Vieira's friendship with Weah, who took him under his wing at Milan, could, however, have cost him his life. Weah was driving them to France when his car went out of control and crashed. Neither, luckily, was hurt.

Vieira's mixed fortunes pursued him to the Atlanta Olympic Games — last summer. Expected to be a crucial member of the France team, he was injured before the tournament began, and had to go home.

Sometimes it is difficult to remember that this mature, towering young man is still only 20, such is his self-possession. As yet, he speaks little English, but the arrival of Wenger and the presence of the former Strasbourg player,

'Certainly he must now carry a large burden in the Arsenal midfield'

Remi Garde, make up for that. Besides, it is less than a year ago that Vieira was competing with Italian.

He began his French career with Tours but, at 16, was happy to move up the scale to Cannes. Modesty was his watchword even when, as an 18-year-old, he made a notable goal for Hlorville against the mighty Paris Saint-Germain. "There's nothing to say," he observed. "Me, I listen to the advice of the veterans. They teach me to stay humble and modest. I don't want my head to swell."

It clearly has not but the Cannes players of that time were lavish in applause. "I had nine years with PSV Eindhoven, and I've never seen such a phenomenon," the Dutchman, Adick Koot, said. "He's a kid, but he can do everything in football. He hasn't even any need of advice."

From Wenger, Vieira will willingly take advice, and if he continues to pick up the pace, it could end well for Arsenal.

Laws dismissed after two years at Grimsby

BRIAN LAWS, the Grimsby Town manager, was dismissed yesterday after two years at Blundell Park (Russell Kempson writes). He is the thirteenth manager, in the FA Carling Premiership and Nationwide League, to leave his job this season.

John Cockerill, the youth coach, has been placed in charge for the first division game against Sheffield United tomorrow.

Ronny Rosenthal, the Israel and Tottenham Hotspur striker, is to join Bournemouth, the Nationwide League second division club, on loan. If the move is

successful, Bournemouth will have to pay £300,000 to make it permanent. Rosenthal has not started a match this season.

A takeover of Nottingham Forest is likely to be completed by early December after the annual meeting gave overwhelming backing to the first steps towards change. Just one of the 209 shareholders, who each own a single £1 share, voted against a motion instructing the board of directors to step up their talks with bidders. A final decision will be made at an extraordinary meeting when the board will recommend one of the offers.

TENNIS

Gustafsson enjoys benefit of net gains

FROM ALIX RAMSAY IN PARIS

IN THE absence of any star names, the ATP Tour offered up a new character to grab the headlines at the Paris Open yesterday. And while the tennis between Magnus Gustafsson and Marc Rosset may at times have been turgid, the performance of the electronic net-cord monitor was keeping everyone on the edge of their seats.

Throughout the match the net appeared to have a mind of its own, bleeping when the ball touched the net — and bleeping again when it did not. While it may have amused the crowd, the players were less than impressed, asking the tour supervisor, Mark Darby, to turn it off and rely on a man with his finger on the net to tell whether each service was good or not.

The ATP's response was hardly high-tech. Three times Darby appeared with a roll of adhesive tape to adjust the offending gadget, and three times his influence made no difference. For Rosset, it was all too much. Given his first chance to reach a semi-final in two years, he lost 6-2, 3-6, 6-2. Caught out yet again by the quality of Gustafsson's returns and the frequency of the electronic bleeps, he registered his disgust by balancing his racket on his nose and got a round of applause which cheered him up enormously.

Afterwards he was subdued to the point of torpor. "I think there is a better way to spend so much money than on a machine that does not work," he said. Gustafsson, a level-headed soul, was in agreement. "It destroyed the rhythm and the match," he said.

Gustafsson, however, has bigger fish to fry. A semi-final place against either Thomas Enqvist or Stefan Edberg could help his chances of making the Sweden Davis Cup team.

Results, page 46

Celebrating the switch from sinner to saint

SIMON BARNES



On Saturday

IT IS time to celebrate the charm and goodness of the great and kindly Tonya Harding. Harding, you will remember, was the bad girl in the great ice skating soap opera, in which the doll-like Nancy Kerrigan was assaulted and whacked on the knee and Harding was later found guilty of obstructing the course of justice in the subsequent investigation of the case.

Well, Harding is now a hero, a saint and a life-saver. Never a girl of pretentious tastes, last weekend she went to a local bar near where she lives in Portland, Oregon, in order to play video poker. God, Harding says, must have sent her there. For while she was doing her stuff, Alice Olson, 31, collapsed. Harding, pausing only to call police on her mobile phone, at once took charge and performed mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. "It was very, very scary," Harding said. "The lady was literally dead for two minutes."

But Harding brought her round and comforted her until paramedics arrived. It was members of Olson's family who went public with the story. Harding worked with the elderly as part of the conditions for her probation after she was found guilty. She is still banned for life from skating, but hopes to make a comeback in unofficial events.

Final whistle

Ajax, the Amsterdam football club, have opened a special cemetery for dead fans. It takes the form of a miniature football field, complete with a toy grandstand. It lies inside the larger cemetery at Osdorp, on the edge of town, and is turfed with sods from the now-demolished De Meer stadium. After cremation, you can scatter the ashes of the loved one across the little football field.

Foot fault

Adolfo Zapata collected the sum of \$195 a week in worker's compensation benefits between November 1 and December 17 in 1995. He claimed that he injured his foot while working for a catering company in June 1995. A

videotape of the New York City Marathon run on November 12 1995 shows Zapata finishing in 240th position, recording a highly respectable time of 2hr 48min 54sec. Zapata was arrested this week for allegedly taking the foot injury to collect compensation.

Spirit rules

It was the final of the Indians Olympics football tournament for women in central Brazil. Bororo played Bakleri, these two being tribes from the Mato Grosso. Saddlely, there was a clap of thunder. At once Nayara, the Bororo stopper, picked up the ball and gave it to the referee, saying: "The spirit of the Great Creator is showing itself. We cannot continue." The referee awarded a penalty to the other side, but Bakleri refused to take it. Both teams left the pitch. "I'm used to taking

games all over Brazil," said Eraldo Alves, the referee, "and sometimes I've been threatened with death. But things like this I've never seen." The teams returned to the pitch after 15 minutes. Bororo won 3-2 and celebrated by kicking each other.

Five starters

I have a report of a football match between Old Paludians '94 and Martin Baker S and S Club in the Chiltonian League premier division. It comes in the ever-delightful *Non-League Traveller* magazine.

The visitors, not surprisingly, won 5-0 in front of a crowd of ten, which included four travellers. I say not surprisingly as the home side only had five players at the scheduled kick-off time, and I suppose did quite well to rustle up a full team... there was only one match-ball fit for play (the visitors supplied one of theirs when the original was looted into the car park of the adjacent pub) and two others were in need of pumping up (no pump available), no penalty spot was marked at one end, a stanchion was deemed dangerous by the referee and one of the linesmen was felled by an inaccurate shot during the pre-match kickabout... we were lucky to see a game at all... all a bit of a shame really, as the club have made considerable ground improvements over the summer months."

Coming it

Here is a further footnote to the great book of sporting superstition. Rhaal Cormier, pitcher for Montreal Expos, was having trouble with his pitching. The pitching coach, Joe Kerrigan, put it down to nothing more than bad luck, and was convinced that all that was needed was a charm. So he appealed to the fans for an Irish coin and one of them came up with an Irish 20p piece.

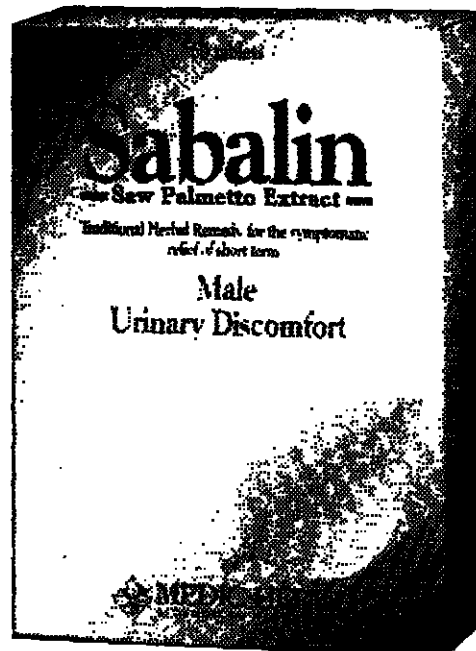
Cormier dutifully placed the coin in his pocket next time he had a game to pitch. He was clobbered on the ankle by a batted ball and had to leave the game and go on what Americans picturesquely call "the disabled list".

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RUGBY LEAGUE 47

Great Britain tour ends on note of low farce

SPORT

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Lehane feels heat before Melbourne Cup



Hoddle puts his faith in player's desire to change Gascoigne given last chance

By ROB HUGHES, FOOTBALL CORRESPONDENT

WHEN England's plane takes off for Tbilisi next Wednesday for a demanding World Cup qualifying match against Georgia, there will be more danger of group counselling therapy than a repeat of loutish misbehaviour three miles high.

Glenn Hoddle, the Samaritan of football managers, has chosen not only Paul Gascoigne, but also Tony Adams and Paul Merson, rehabilitating alcoholics. Paul Ince, sent off in two of his last three games, and Ian Wright, whose sometimes wondrous goals are seldom far apart from his impulsive words.

The England coach clearly is on a mission, one as dangerous as throwing petrol on the bonfire. Hoddle, whose one doubt about accepting the calling to coach his country concerned the intrusion into his committed family life, clearly believes that where there is talent he must wrestle with the imperfections of personality. With the unadulterated backing of Keith

convinced that a hat-trick against Motherwell last weekend is proof of his form or fitness and, on that ground alone, Hoddle had the opportunity to take Gascoigne, at least temporarily, out of the intensity of the public spotlight in England for this difficult trip.

Instead, Hoddle announced: "No way do I condone what Paul has done, but I see it as an opportunity at this time to help him change rather than cast him out. I know every single detail now, a lot of it has to remain private, but I needed that detail to help me make the decision."

Hoddle believes that it was crucial to get involved in Gascoigne's personal problems, and to waste no time in doing so. The coach said, not for the first time, that he considers the person more important than football. Interesting, for he is a football coach rather than a mentor, guide or therapist.

There were 23 names in Hoddle's squad, which was announced at Lancaster Gate yesterday. Ordinarily, one would be focusing on the need to replace the captain, Alan Shearer, and his almost singular ability to strike England goals. Wright, 33 tomorrow, believed his opportunity had gone; Robbie Fowler, 22 years and a sporting lifetime in hand, has just returned to his most potent and thrilling scoring form at Liverpool.

And yet, one knew that, in this autumn of the British moral debate, Gascoigne would dominate all. Julie Bindel, representing an international conference on violence and abuse against women, called it an "outrage" that Hoddle should pick Gascoigne. Hoddle's response is to reiterate that he has spent two weeks getting to know the facts, implicitly facts more detailed than those presented to the public in the press.

"Rather than punishment," Hoddle said, "we need to change him, to change his personality a little bit off the field. I have seen a change in Paul even in this short time. Walter Smith [the Rangers manager] has seen it too... the boy wants to put it right and I believe he should be given the time to do that."

The trouble could be that Gascoigne is convincing at apologising. He has had much



Gascoigne arrives at Ibrox for training with Rangers yesterday, having retained his place in the England squad

practice and when his career, effectively his entire life, is threatened he is, indeed, a little boy lost and his determination to atone is convincing. Hoddle, just three weeks ago, opined: "I'm only interested in the Gascoigne before me. He is a serious man who wants to succeed and now that

he is married with a son, I believe that has made a big difference to him. Gazza should look at the baby lying in the bed at night, because a baby's body needs careful looking after. It is special. When a footballer reaches 30, the body also needs to be looked after."

The feeling at Lancaster Gate yesterday was that even Gascoigne knows this is his last chance. "Last chance? I don't think you can actually say that," Hoddle answered. "But he knows he's got to change and to sustain that change over a long period." The coach, revealing his own

personality and his own commitment to that change, now also depends on it. Hoddle cannot win, even if he wins the football match.

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Uefa draw pits Newcastle against French

By DAVID MADDOCK

ALL OF those clubs with European pedigree avoided each other in the third-round draw of the Uefa Cup yesterday, offering Newcastle United, Britain's sole remaining representative, a relatively comfortable tie. They will travel to Metz, France, for the first leg of the tie on November 19, and entertain the side languishing in mid-table in their domestic competition at St James' Park on December 3.

It promises to be a straightforward tie for Newcastle, and much the same can be said for the other favourites in the competition. Internazionale, Feyenoord, Anderlecht and Valencia. Only SV Hamburg and AS Monaco have really drawn the short straw by being paired together, thus ensuring that at last one fancied side will not survive to the last eight.

Kevin Keegan, the Newcastle manager, was at pains to point out that any team still surviving at this stage will present problems, but he found it hard to conceal his satisfaction when he learnt of his side's destiny yesterday lunch-time.

"We're a big scalp now and really it is a good draw," he said. "They are halfway down the French league, so they will be focused on this tie, but I am delighted that we have got the first game away. I think it will give us an advantage. We are capable of going on and winning it — but not if we defend away from home as we did in the first two rounds."

One suspects that Keegan would have been happier only if he had been set against SV Hamburg, his former club. While such an obvious reunion has been delayed, there is still a strong connection within the tie. The trip to Metz, a steel town on the German border, offers Ginola a chance to return to his homeland.

The Frenchman has served a long exile from the international side, a frustrating situation exacerbated by his relocation in the North East of England, from Paris. Keegan senses an anger welling within the winger and believes that the tie will present the opportunity for Ginola to show his countrymen what they have been missing.

"It is a chance for him to go home and show how well he is playing," he said. "He is in

fine form at the moment, but when you play overseas it can be overlooked. I know that David is desperate to get back into the French team and I can only help him if he goes over there and plays well."

Ginola was a little more philosophical. "I can do nothing more than play well, because it is not up to me, it's the decision of Aimé Jacquet [the France coach]. What can I do? Go to his house, knock on the door and get down on one knee to beg? I want to play for my country again, but I am not that sort of person."

Liverpool are Britain's only team certain of a place in the quarter-finals of a European competition, but they will have to wait until December 11 to discover their opponents in the Cup Winners' Cup, when the draw for all competitions will be made.

Liverpool will not play in Europe again until March, but their victory over FC Sion, of Switzerland, in extravagant fashion on Thursday evening

has offered them a wonderful opportunity to secure the one European trophy not to have adorned Anfield.

There are quality European names such as Barcelona, Benfica, Fiorentina and Paris Saint-Germain left in the draw, but Roy Evans, the Liverpool manager, is not unduly worried.

"We didn't defend well against Sion, but I believe that we have enough flair and movement upfront to make us fear no-one," he said.

Savo Milosevic has yet to complete his £4.5 million move from Aston Villa to Perugia, of Italy, although club officials are confident the deal will go through.

Milosevic was back in England yesterday afternoon and is due to fly to Yugoslavia tomorrow to prepare for the World Cup qualifying match against the Czech Republic. Brian Little, the Aston Villa manager, said: "We are trying to tie up all the loose ends."

European cup encounters are laced with intrigue

By DAVID HANDS, RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

THE promotion of European club rugby's second season may have been appalling — "ludicrous" is one of the kinder adjectives applied to its management — but no stigma can be attached to the players who go into the final round of qualifying matches today: they have produced a series of results so intriguing that only three of the eight quarter-finalists can be named with certainty at this stage.

Pre-tournament favourites for the Heineken Cup, such as Toulouse, Bath and Harlequins, have already received stern reminders that life was not meant to be easy — indeed Toulouse have spent much of the week since losing 77-17 to Wasps agonising on the possible effects of such a hiding. Leicester, unbeaten in pool B, will seek to avoid such introspection after the meeting at Welford Road with Llanelli today, but they have been warned.

"I think everyone in Wales is fed up with the English clubs saying how good they are," Rupert Moon, the Llanelli scrum half, who at one stage last summer was linked with a possible move to Leicester, said. "This is our opportunity to prove them wrong and to

give Welsh rugby another boost."

Cardiff and Pontypridd have already beaten two of England's best sides [Wasps and Bath, respectively]. Now it's our chance to make it three. I think Welsh rugby is on the up and the European results so far have proved as much. But you have to beat the best. We know we could go through even if we lose but it would be stupid to worry about other results. We have to win."

Townsend's honour 46
Robinson progresses 46

One benefit of the competition is that sides such as Leicester and Llanelli can restore playing links ruptured by the advent of league rugby. The two have not met since 1989 and Llanelli might have wished their pack to be in bed up with the English clubs saying how good they are. Mike Voyle and Andrew Gibbs are injured and Julian Williams, the flanker, has snapped a

ligament. Leicester, who have omitted Rory Underwood again, are offering half-price admission to their members. So far this season there have been only three home league games, and even Leicester's swarming numbers have baulked at paying full price for Anglo-Welsh and European games.

Dale McIntosh, who is closing in on a Wales cap, is fit to play for Pontypridd in Dax, but the Welsh club travelled in the knowledge that a bad defeat could cost them a quarter-final place on points difference. Similarly, Bath must beat Treviso by a minimum 16 points to ensure advancement from pool A. As they play this afternoon and Pontypridd this evening, it will be an anxious wait for the West Countrymen.

Brive, like Leicester and Cardiff, already certain to go through, meet Ulster in Belfast with an uncertain after their defeat of Harlequins. After a week in which their unbeaten season's record and league record have gone by the board, Harlequins will wish to avoid any mistakes against Caledonia at the Stoop Memorial ground — just as Toulouse have a reputation to restore against Munster at Les Sept Deniers.

It was as if Wasps had planted a bomb in our team," Guy Noves, the Toulouse coach, said after their defeat last Saturday. "It exploded and the worry now is that it has left self-doubt inside my players." That is a situation Munster look to exploit so that they can ensure an Irish presence in the quarter-finals.



Mendez: world class

Mendez to boost Bath pack power

BATH, on the eve of their push for European honours, have added Federico Mendez to their collection of international talent (David Hands writes). The Argentina hooker may be only the first of a new wave of signings, however, if Bath's interest in Steve Atherton, Mendez's team-mate at Bristol, the England A lock, is substantiated.

Mendez made his debut for Argentina as a schoolboy prop in 1990, instantly establishing a reputation by knocking out Paul Ackford, the England lock, and being dismissed for his indiscretion. At 24, and nearly 18st, he has become one of the world's outstanding front-row talents, honing his skills in Natal's finishing school this season, where he was part of their Currie Cup-winning side.

"We are delighted that 'Fred' has decided to join us," John Hall, the Bath director of rugby, said yesterday after Mendez made a flying visit to the Recreation Ground earlier this week. "We feel he will help us realise our ambitions in world rugby."

Players rule out Gooch's rival

By PAT GIBSON

GRAHAM GOOCH, whose performances for Essex last season confirmed him as still the best batsman in the country, is prepared to consider ending his 24-year playing career in order to succeed Raymond Illingworth as chairman of the England selectors.

Gooch, 43, declared his interest yesterday after the Cricketers' Association had blocked the chairmanship ambitions of its general secretary, David Graveney, for a second time because of a possible conflict of interests. "I am contracted to play for Essex next season," Gooch said, "but I would have to give the matter serious thought if I was approached to be England's chairman. Other than that, there is not much else I can say — except that I believe that David Graveney would make a very good chairman."

There is no chance of that now that the Cricketers' Association has reinforced the position it took last March, when several counties wanted Graveney to challenge Illingworth. "We do not think things have altered enough for a different stance to be taken," Tim Curtis, vice-president of the association, said.

Graveney, who is in Australia managing the England A team, reluctantly accepts the situation. "I sensed that there was not 100 per cent support for me running as chairman so I am stepping aside," he said.

"There is a genuine feeling that in the interests of the game it would not be appropriate for someone representing the players to be in a position which inevitably ties

in closely with the management of the game," Curtis said. "We feel that being a servant of two masters could lead to problems. No one is objecting to Graham Gooch. He has recognised one of the potential difficulties by saying that he would no longer play if he was given the job."

So the way has been cleared for Gooch, who served alongside Graveney as a selector last season and would have been working with him on the A tour as coach if he had not decided to stay at home

Scoreboards 46

because of his father's illness. No appointment will be made until March and the new six-man England management committee will not even be in place before January. By then, other candidates will have emerged but there is bound to be considerable support for Gooch, who was the leading Englishman in the batting averages with 1,944 runs at 67.03.

Ashley Giles, the Warwickshire left-arm spinner, prevented the New South Wales XI from establishing a decisive advantage over England A on the second day of the tour match in Tamworth. In his 27 overs, Giles took four for 79 as the New South Wales side reached 215 for five, to lead by 60 runs. Giles reduced them to 47 for four but Scott Thompson and Craig Glascock added 113 in an unbroken sixth-wicket partnership in the final session. "I got very tired, the heat was incredible," Giles said.

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THE TIMES
weekend



Carried away to war

On Monday, international volunteers who fought in the Spanish Civil War are returning to Madrid. Three of the survivors tell their stories to **TUNKU VARADARAJAN**

It is not their age that grips me first, but their language. Sam Russell is 81 years old. Milton Wolff is also 81. Patience Edney, still very beautiful, is 85. These three proud, lucid old lefties — two Brits, one American — all veterans of the Spanish Civil War, say things such as "proletarian", "class struggle", "progressive forces" and "working class", words not now used even in the Labour Party. They use these words unselfconsciously and seem to assume that you use them, too. Their faith is absolute, and touching.

Once members of the International Brigades, the communist volunteer corps which fought Franco, the three return next week, along with more than 450 other veterans from Europe and America, to the land of their youthful ideals. Spain has invited them back. It wants to honour them with civic receptions, commemorative monuments and gala meals. Most of all, it wants to bestow Spanish citizenship on them, for risking their lives 60 years ago in a war that broke the hearts, and took the lives, of volunteers from around the world. It is a gathering of survivors.

September 1936. Sam Russell was 21, a student of Egyptology at London University, preparing to go to Cairo for his first dig. Hitler was in power in Germany. Mussolini in Italy. Blackshirts had marched on London's streets. "Although I was in the left-wing movement, I'd joined the Officers' Training Corps (OTC) at university. I was interested in military matters and I thought it would be amusing. They were so hard-up for recruits then that they even took obvious lefties like me. My father, who was anti-military, as were many people in Britain at the time, was very unhappy with me for joining." Days before leaving for Egypt, Mr Russell met the poet John

Cornford, a Cambridge graduate and a great-grandson of Charles Darwin. Persuasive as only poets can be, he prevailed upon the young Egyptologist to forget his dig and head for Spain, "to stop fascism in its tracks". By the end of December Cornford was dead, shot on the Córdoba front, and Mr Russell badly wounded in the same battle, "probably by our own machinegun company". Cornford's death was like that of countless others, but more widely lamented because of his poetry.

On the last mile to Huesca. The last fence for our pride. Think so kindly, dear, that I Sense you at my side.

Of the 2,000 British volunteers, 500 died and 1,200 were wounded. Of the 2,800 Americans, 900 were killed. Frenchmen died, too, as did Germans, Austrians, Poles, Czechs, Hungarians, Yugoslavs, Swedes. Unlike Cornford, most of those who died wrote little that survives.

But many wrote letters: some boyish, to mothers; others passionate, or manly, to girlfriends back home. Milton Wolff, "sort of an art student from Brooklyn", wrote often from the Spanish front to Ann Lenore, the girl he was later to marry. He wrote letters like this:

"Ann Lenore, I was out putting the men through their paces this afternoon, teaching them how to kill. Most of them are new men and must learn the art... We must rehearse until we are perfect at the play, for if we succeed we end all this stupid drama."

Mr Wolff, like Mr Russell, was 21 when he left for Spain in January 1937. A member of the



Above: Patience Edney as a 25-year-old nurse on the frontline, and today at 85. Top: Republican volunteers leaving for the Civil War — a promise of death before tyranny painted on their train



Young Communist League, he was Jewish, as were so many of the American volunteers. Consider these names: Harry Fisher, Moe Fishman, Jack Friedman, Carl Geiser, Toby Jensky, Hyman Katz, Sidney Kaufman, Lawrence Kleidman, Leo Leverson, Fred Lutz, Harry Meloff, Wilfred Mendelson, Edwin Rolfe, Leon Rosenthal, Paul Sigel. "The first fighters against the Holocaust were Jews of the International Brigade."

Unlike Mr Russell, who five months earlier could take the so-called "Red Train" from the Gare d'Austerlitz to the Spanish front, laid on by the Soviet Union's agencies in Paris, Mr Wolff had to slip into Spain through a pass in the Pyrenees. "France had closed her borders and I was forced to scale mountains. Boy, that was tough for a city fellow like me, used to climbing no more than a few stairs in Brooklyn. But I was determined to get there and put my ass where my mouth was, if you'll pardon the expression."

Patience Edney, unlike Mr Russell and Mr Wolff, did not go to wield a weapon. She was a nurse, and had volunteered to serve in Spain's war. But why did she, a 25-year-old midwife at the University College Hospital, swap a steady job in London for high-risk work in a war-torn, anarchist Spanish village?

The words tumble out in a firm-voiced torrent. "Nurses were bullied. We worked a 12-hour day, six days a week, for little pay. There was no health service and the conditions in which the English urban poor lived were squalid. Europe was bubbling then. It was volcanic, quite volcanic."

Mrs Edney adds: "Ideals were flowering in the midst of despair. I saw that the Spaniards were getting at the Establishment, and I had to join them. I told my mother, who swallowed hard and said something about it being in the family nature. So off I went to my first field job, at the Carlos Marx hospital on the Aragon front."

The poet Auden, who worked briefly as a Republican stretcher-bearer in 1937, described the dark allure to radical young people of Spain's Civil War.

They clung like burrs to the long expresses that lurch through the unjust lands, through the night, through the alpine tunnel They floated over the oceans They walked the passes. All presented their lives.

Mrs Edney, then Miss Darton, came simply to save lives. "But it was often so hopeless. I saw 17-year-old Spanish boy soldiers

march off to battle, singing, and not returning home again. I saw grown men go mad, and men die of wounds which should not have killed them. We even set up hospitals in caves. The Spanish were very grateful to us, and that was sad. Conditions were very, very harsh."

Every corner of Spain was harsh, and young Russell had an uncomfortably early taste of that harshness. His group from Britain had just arrived at the International Brigade headquarters in Albacete, and was put into a French battalion under a Colonel Dumont (known as Colonel Kodak because of his fondness for being photographed). "There was a language problem. Our weapons were all of different shapes and sizes, apart from being antiquated and dangerous. Training was a shambles, and we hardly had any of it." Yet weeks later, in November 1936, Mr Russell was pitched into the battle to hold Madrid, perhaps the fiercest of the entire war.

"We were in the front line, in the university campus, trying to hold back Franco's Moorish soldiers. I was holed up in the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters, and got a pretty sharp tutorial in warfare. The fighting was ferocious, building to building, floor to floor. All that OTC strategy from London, based on bushy-topped trees and formations, was totally useless."

"But I remember laughing out loud when I found a tourist poster in a room, in the middle of the fighting. It was a picture of a donkey cart, with the words, 'Spain: the charm of the East with the comfort of the West.'"

Spain's more obvious charms were not lost on Mr Russell either. "I recall La Roda, a village near Albacete. They grow crocus flowers there, so they can extract saffron from the stamens. Did you know it takes 150 flowers too yield a gram of saffron? The

Continued on page 2

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Essence of a natural cure



by
**RACHEL
KELLY**

FLOWER REMEDIES

WHAT THEY ARE: Flower remedies are said to have therapeutic powers that offer the perfect antidote to stress by balancing negative feelings
ADVANTAGES: It can't do you any harm
DISADVANTAGES: It may not work @ COST: £20 a session @ VERDICT: The jury is still out.

This sounds like one for the fairies. "Flower remedies are 38 plant and flower-based essences each designed to treat a different feeling." A different what? Yes, that's right, feeling. The idea is — and I quote from the Dr Edward Bach Centre, the Oxfordshire home of the original and best-known flower remedies in Britain — that "by stimulating the body's own capacity to heal itself, by balancing negative feelings, helping you to take control, you will 'get more out of life'."

The remedies primarily treat emotional not physical problems. So, dementis, dreams, or lack of interest in the present. Wild rose treats apathy or resignation. Olive treats lack of energy. Gentian treats despondency; beech intolerance. And chestnut bud, as you might not imagine, treats a "failure to learn from past mistakes", the centre says.

My cynicism grew when I learnt from whence hail the remedies. They are made from flowers soaked in spring water and then boiled or left in the sun to "energise". The resulting essence is preserved in brandy and bottled. It all started because Dr Edward Bach, the creator of the system, believed the energy of plants was transferred to the dew that gathered on them in the mornings.

But curiosity overcame me and I found myself chatting to Brenda Woodward at her flat in Westminster. A smiley, registered "counsellor" and a serene 63-year-old mother of five, "I started on flower remedies about 12 years ago," she said. "I was suffering from a wonky gall-bladder, brittle nails and scurf in my hair."

Soon after treating her emotional symptoms, she cancelled her forthcoming gall-bladder operation, and

two years ago trained with the Bach centre to become a counsellor.

"Training really began because of EC regulations," she says. "The Bach centre had to decide what to call its remedies and, once it had labelled them medicines, a batch of rules came in from Europe. Thus there is now training for counsellors."

After a three-day course with the centre, she worked for six months at home, and wrote a thesis on the theory of the remedies and some case histories.

So here goes. The remedies have no pharmacological ingredients. Instead, they are believed to contain a plant's actual energy, which works on a "vibrational" level within the body.

Now for the quantum physics. All matter is made up of sub-atomic particles of energy. These particles vibrate in a way that keep us healthy and balanced. When ill, we lose this balance. Disturbances can be corrected by ingesting natural substances with vibrational patterns that match those of our own energies. The principle is known as "sympathetic resonance".

So that's clear then. Emotional problems and stress react best, but these essences can help physical problems that have emotional and psychological components, too.

This is where it all begins to become more convincing, because I am sure it makes sense that there is an emotional component to most illnesses. I invariably get ill when I am miserable or have had a row with the dog.

And, for all you cynics, this is where doctors agree. Andrew Tressider, a Somerset GP, who routinely uses flower remedies in about a third of his cases. He believes in empowering his patients. Naturally, when you are ill you feel down, and when you



Brenda Woodward, a counsellor with the Dr Edward Bach Centre, was cured of "a wonky gall bladder, brittle nails and scurf"

are down you often fall ill, he points out.

Edward Bach was a Harley Street doctor and bacteriologist. Though considered odd at the time, he believed in treating the whole person, not just the illness, an attitude that has become commonplace in an age of holistic medicine. Observing his patients, he believed that a person's nature and psychological state affected their health, that physical disease was often a manifestation of emotional problems.

Dr Bach developed 38 flower and plant-based remedies. Each aimed to cure different emotional problems, grouped under the

headings: fear, uncertainty, insufficient interest in present circumstances, loneliness, oversensitivity, despair and over-concern for the welfare of others.

I get spots. So I thought Mrs Woodward might be able to tell me what emotional problem was behind them. We had a lovely chat, touching on work, rest and play. I left with a small brown bottle rather like something out of *Alice in Wonderland*, which had impatience to deal with my impatience, crab apple to clear the spots, olive for tiredness, and vervain for being bossy — all of which could lead to the stress which in turn leads to the spots. I take four drops on my

tongue, or dilute them in a glass of water four times a day.

I can't tell you whether it works yet. The remedies are ones for life. I am not expecting anything very dramatic. Mrs Woodward says not to. There are no side-effects. The impact is usually gradual, she says, in that I will increasingly feel more balanced. And in time she promises a peaches-and-cream rather than a pizza-faced complexion.

But I can say that I left her home feeling calm and, surprisingly, rather elated. "Oh yes," she said. "There's a lot of healing in this room."

It may be one for the fairies, but I am not so sure.

SPECIALISTS

■ THERE is only one centre for flower remedies in Britain but it has 350 practitioners on its books and will refer you to a specialist in your area. It also attempts to match an individual's needs to particular practitioners and offers free advice over the telephone.

■ Prices vary, but the average cost for one hour's consultation and treatment bottle is £15-20.

■ The Dr Edward Bach Centre, Mount Vernon, Bakers Lane, Solihull, Oxfordshire OX10 0PZ (01491 834678).

SERIOUS SHOPPING

by
**GILES
COREN**

COFFEE MACHINES

You are sitting round at Paddy and Wendy's little news house after a particularly spiffing supper, hands on belly, breathing heavily and keeping your good eye on the last slice of treacle pud, when Wendy, a vision in pearls, and lambswool, addresses the throng, thus: "Anyone for a spot of coffee?"

Crucial moment, this. Wendy's a reliable filly but a bit of a tea-drinker — the image of the worshipful bean not being etched on her DNA. Could be a sad end to a charming evening.

A kettle boils. So it's not espresso or cappuccino. Nor is it percolated, Turkish, Lebanese, or any other

King of the espresso machines is the Favoni Professional. A snip at £450, it has full chrome body, armour, phallic pump handle and a classic 1930s-style pressure gauge, with red overdrive indicator. Even with only 24 hours to save Earth, Flash Gordon would have found time to make a cuppa with one of these.

The electric percolator is making a comeback, and the Russell Hobbs 9700 (£36.50) is a classic of the genre. Bubbling the water repeatedly through the grounds, it does make a rather bitter coffee, but the sight of it gurgling up into the Perspex handle is a delicious throwback to the 1970s. For smoother

coffee, take the plunge. La Cafetière's chrome-finish model (£29.50 for the four-cup variety) is *de rigueur* — the gold finish is vulgar and more expensive, the black plastic simply out of the question. Interesting variations are the BMF insulated version (£29), which keeps the coffee hot for two hours, and the £16 Guzzini in blue or green translucent plastic.

Filter machines are many and various, but as they make only paper-flavoured mud I do not include them.

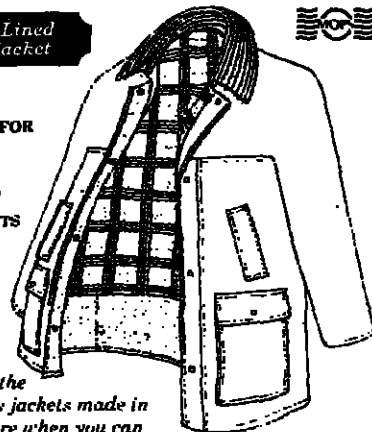
For that ersatz Conran feeling, I recommend on-stove percolating. The six-cup Bialetti Moka (£15.50) is solid and sturdy and has a moustachioed Italian embossed on it. The Viganò Kontessa (£49) may sound like a cheap car, but makes up for it with a curvaceous, Art Deco feel.

And the tricky guest? He only wants to scoff, anyway. So keep the Favoni out of sight and open the Maxwell House. One tip, though, if I may: boil the water in a Bodum Cordless Jelly Kettle. Sold in transparent turquoise, orange, yellow or blue, it looks as if it were fashioned from last year's sandals, and would elevate even a Batchelor's Cup-A-Soup to the condition of design statement.

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'The welcome from the Spanish people was our reward'

Continued from page 1
women would gather flowers in the sun, and then sit in the shade to take the stamens out. I remember going to help. It was the best way to get to know the girls from the village." He chuckled deeply at the memory, then trailed off into thought.

Although Mr Wolff was going out with Ann Lenore back home, he, too, had a glad eye for the girls. Here is a letter. "Mom dearest: There I sat in the club 'Chicote' sipping a whisky and soda when what floated into my vision? The most beautiful face I've ever seen... a copper-coloured face, gracefully long, with sweeping lines joining jaw and neck — slanting eyes, black and sparkling — a small nose, tilted so you could see the tiny nostrils — full sensuous and voluptuous lips, slightly negroid — naturally arched eyebrows and black-blue-black waving hair. She was tall, yet small boned and she didn't touch the ground when she walked — she floated."

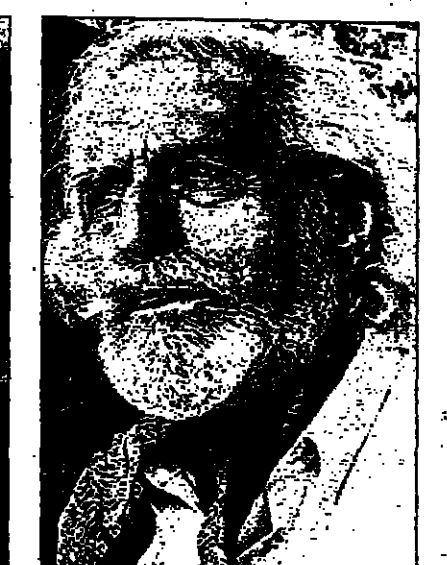
But Ann Lenore stood by her man. "I remember, I was unaccounted for after the battle of Belchite, for about eight or nine days, and everyone thought I'd been taken prisoner. So what does she do, this Catholic girlfriend of mine? She writes to Franco, as a Catholic, asking him to free me. He didn't write back, of course."



Sam Russell, a 21-year-old Egyptology student who dropped everything to fight in Spain, now lives in Clapham, south London, aged 81



Milton Wolff, an American volunteer who progressed from the rank of water-boy to battalion commander, is 81 and lives near San Francisco



Mr Wolff was the ninth and last commander of the Lincoln battalion, comprised entirely of American volunteers. "I was never wounded. I survived. That's how I progressed from being a water-boy for the machine-guns to commander, if you lasted the war, you led."

He now lives near San Francisco, having had trouble throughout his life for his communist beliefs. "I'm not looking forward to going back to Spain. I've been back three times, but it's emotional. I'm honoured they're offering us nationality, but I think I'll stay American. I'd

have to swear allegiance to the king, although I think he's a pretty good guy really."

Sam Russell, who lives in Clapham, south London, and wrote for many years for the communist *Morning Star*, never commanded anything. "All the time I was with the International Brigade I occupied the highest rank of any army in the world, that of a common soldier." Will he take up the offer of Spanish nationality? "No, I've managed well on British nationality so far. But I'm very moved by it, though I'm not an emotional man,

you know. I feel rather unworthy. We were young then, and the welcome we got from the Spanish people was our best reward."

In her basement flat in Camden Town, north London, Mrs Edney is the most emotionally torn of all. "I have never been back to Spain since I left in October 1938. Never. There are too many memories, and the memories upset me terribly. ... A chap I was deeply in love with, a German, was killed on the Ebro. I'm going to make efforts not to go back to all those places where I

was with him. His death altered my life, but I've tried to make up for it."

She later married an Englishman, from the Communist Party, whom she met in London after the war. He had been a volunteer in Spain like herself. Yet there is no doubt that she would see in these lines, by Edwin Rolfe of the Lincoln battalion, questions from her own clenched past:

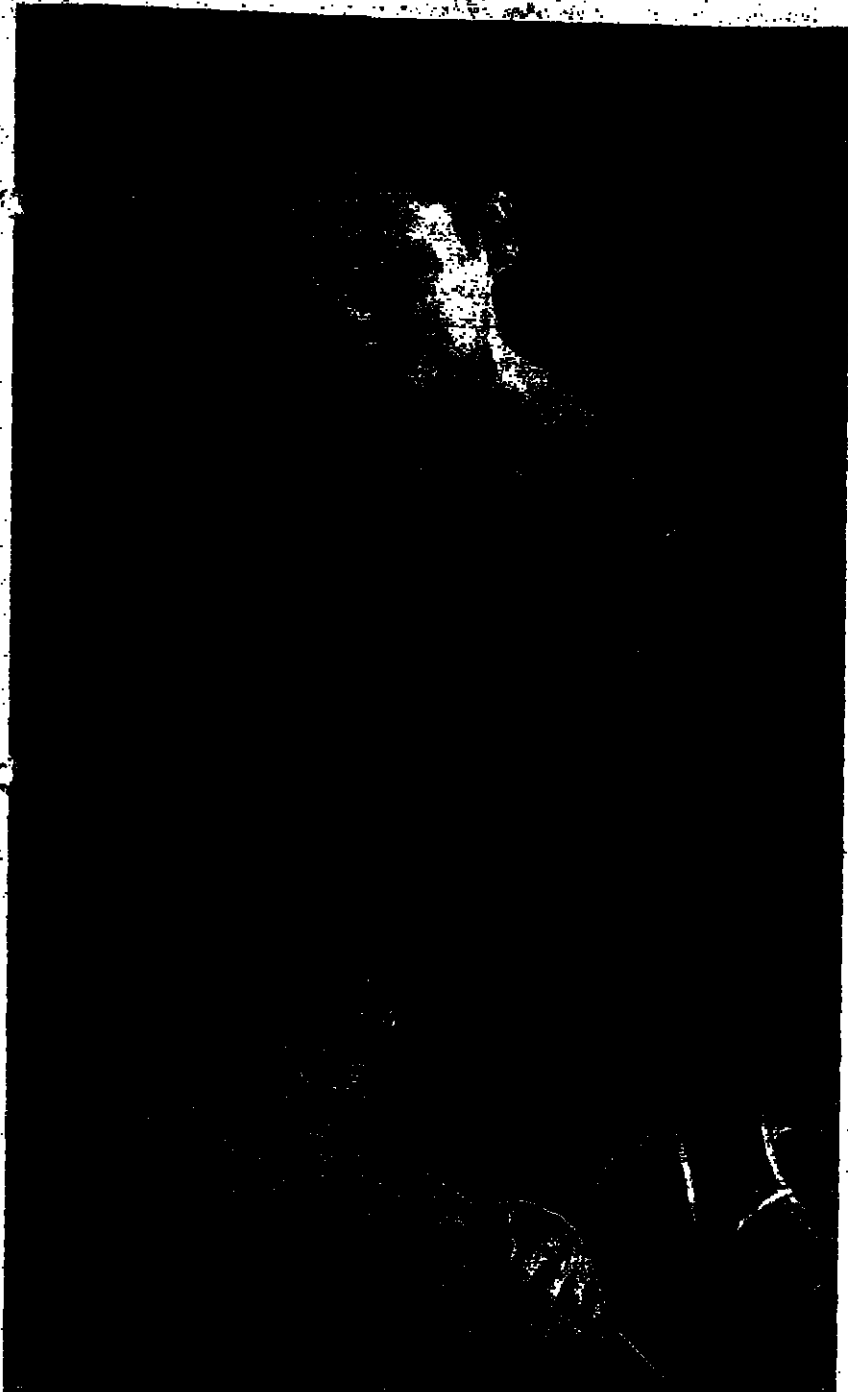
Why are my thoughts in another country? Why do I always return to the sunken road through corroded hills

With the Moorish castle's shadow casting ruins over my shoulder?

Rolfe was Wolff's friend. But his words are Russell's, too. And Mrs Edney's. And those of every surviving volunteer old enough to have been there, and young enough to remember.

● Extracts from Milton Wolff's letters, from *Madrid 1937: Letters from the Abraham Lincoln Brigade from the Spanish Civil War*, Ed. Cary Nelson & Jefferson Hendricks/Routledge, 1996.

Farewell to the little black dress



ABOVE: Chocolate lace dress with satin slip, £242, Betty Jackson Cruise Wear, 311 Brompton Road, SW3 (0171-899 7884).
RIGHT: Orchid pink embossed velvet jacket, £245, matching trousers, £125, Whistles, 12 St Christophers Place, W1 (0171-487 4484). Silver sequin and chiffon top, £754, Ben de Lisi. Flower chair clip, from £19.95, Johnny Loves Rosie.



ABOVE: Purple velvet wrap coat, £224, Ben de Lisi at Harvey Nichols, SW1 (0171-734 0089). Ruby stretch satin dress, £79.99, in Wear; flower hair clip, from a selection, Johnny Loves Rosie at Fenwicks, Bond Street, W1 (0171-629 9161). Fine gold twisted rope slingbacks, £285, Gina, made to order (0171-235 2632).

Bring some colour and fun into the party season with 'flapper' styles, says **GRACE BRADBERRY**

There is a kind of dyslexia that afflicts women when they open party invitations. The dress code may say "lounge suit", "black tie", "formal" or nothing at all. But they will always read the words Little Black Dress.

The rise and rise of the LBD says more about our cowardice than our sense of style. It may be chic, it may be flattering, it may even be witty but, above all, it is safe — and that's the reason we wear it.

Rifling through the wardrobe, it is our enemies, not our admirers whom we see before us, and so, inevitably, we reach for that favourite slither of black — a fabric fortress against the taunts of an unkind world.

Of course, black doesn't really suit many of us, but what's that got to do with anything? After all, wear it short, wear it tight, and wear it in black was the credo of many a 1980s party girl with large thighs and pale skin.

But now fashion designers are mounting an offensive against the tyranny of the LBD. Cynics might say this is because they've realised that women are resurrecting their "investment buys" year after year but, whatever their motivation, it is good news for the ever-more funereal party scene.

To succeed, the alternatives will have to be just as adept at social acrobatics, vaulting from the formal cocktail party to the bring-a-bottle booze-up without falling flat on their backsides.

The trick is to wear something that has an element of both dressing-up and dressing-down: jeans that are made of velvet, a slip dress with a more formal gown or jacket, an immaculately cut bias-dress in a floral print.

But it is by appealing to our sense of humour that designers are most likely to entice us away from black. Let's face it, black dresses along with black leather recliners and matte black coffee tables betray a certain deadpan obsession with style. Beaded "flapper" dresses, bohemian velvet gowns and frilled lingerie-looks — all of which are big fashion stories this winter — suggest a sense of fun.

The whole "flapper" thing is huge this season, with handkerchief hems and fluid shapes making a comeback. Pearce Florida, the British design duo, have made this style their own, and have also revived the cowl necklines and drop backs of the 1930s. Their designs hark back to an earlier, more glamorous era — but they also have a modern edge to them, and a minimalism that makes them easy to wear. Ben de Lisi, another British designer,



ABOVE: Sheer floral top, £247; chocolate brown satin-backed crepe bias-cut skirt, £384, Pearce Florida at Selfridges, W1; Harrods, SW1 (0171-734 0123). Fake fur stole, £50, Gordana at Harrods, SW1; John Lewis, branches nationwide (0171-708 2538). Rose and ribbon, haberdashery departments, selected major stores nationwide. Gold fine strap sandals, £125, Russell & Bromley, selected branches nationwide (0171-629 6903).

is principally known for his fluid styles. This year, as jewel colours replace black, he is using a lot of velvet. "When you're tired of black but don't want to dispense with it altogether, you can do things with Rothko-esque printing — boxes within boxes, in plum and chartreuse on black. It's fluid, graphic, sharp, but dressy."

"When you keep it clean and sharp, then that to me is a recipe for something that works. As soon as you start adding superfluous details you go wrong." We have become conditioned to thinking of simplicity as minimalism

monochrome streaks. Now designers are redefining that. Clean lines and romanticism can gel. A straight shift dress might have roses rambling across chiffon. A lean silhouette becomes less austere when it's covered with beading or sequins.

But above all, we've said goodbye to the Lycra sausage skins that defined slinky dressing a few years ago. Some readers will be crying "Shame!", after all, dresses built like surgical stockings had their uses when the flesh proved weak and the appetite strong.

The new, more flowing shapes don't perform the same function, though in many cases the fabrics still contain Lycra to create a soft elasticity. They are undoubtedly beautiful, but they demand beautiful bodies. Designers appear to have taken to heart Elsa Schiaparelli's advice — "Never fit the dress to the body, but train the body to fit the dress."

Since physical jerks are never a good preparation for the party season (they tend to depress the spirits), the best way to get ready for the new styles is to visit a lingerie department. Marks & Spencer now has knickers designed to suck in the waist, bottom or stomach. It requires physical strength to get into them, but once on, they perform miracles.

Don't buy these vital foundations as an afterthought, however. If you want to stand a chance of shopping without tears, you're better off entering the changing room fully armoured in all that support lingerie has to offer.

Older women, suggests Ben de Lisi, should also beware empire lines and high necklines. "Low necklines frame the face and draw attention away from the stomach or from bare arms."

In general, pattern mixing and deep, bohemian colours are big in evening-wear as in day-wear. If you are dead set on a plain dress, then a devotee scarf from English Eccentrics, Georgia von Esztori or a chain store copy, will give the outfit added richness and texture. Fake fur boas are another good way to jazz up a rather conservative outfit.

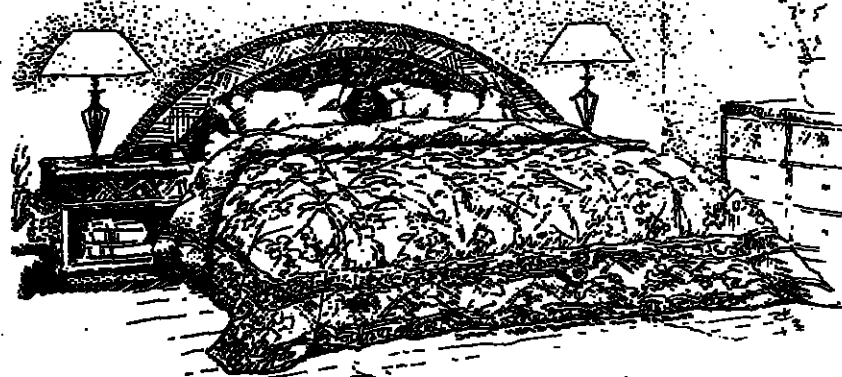
The most chi-chi evening-wear shoes are "Mary-Janes", with a pointed, Charleston toe and a cross-bar. But they're only a good idea if you're tall, otherwise it's best to go for something moderately high, in gold or black. Lacey tights also have a fattening effect and, while fashionable, are not exactly a girl's best friend.

One final word of warning. The fashion industry has Lofita-fever this winter — tiny slip dresses, frilly hems, dodgy nuances. At the end of a long day's shopping desperation can play terrible tricks on the mind. But as you reach for that slither of pink, remember Diana Vreeland's airy assertion that "Elegance is refusal" and put it back. People might talk...

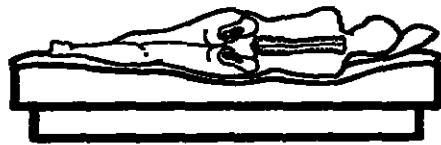
Photographs by Rod Nissen Petzer, Makeup by Alex Babsky, Hair by James McKeehan, The Cutting Room, SW16. Styling by Amanda Uppal.

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The popular art of bonfire making

BY STEPHEN ANDERTON

THERE IS all the difference in the world between a Guy Fawkes bonfire and a garden bonfire. Bonfire Night fires always seem to be built on the wigwam principle, leaning everything in to the centre around Mr Fawkes's hot seat. And prayers for dry weather are as much for the spectators as the fire, which usually consists of worm-eaten old furniture, carpenters' off-cuts and fallen dead branches. Thanks to the usual cardboard boxes and petrol-soaked old mattress (less its stash of fivers, one hopes), the fire lights with a woomph, and everyone is happy. Even with the smoke.

Garden bonfires are another matter. They can moulder and smoulder, and the smoke makes enemies of neighbours, peppering their drying smalls with smut.

Some people use bonfires to get rid of the leaves, although real gardeners keep their leaves for mulching. But the "wood" (conifer prunings, hedge clippings, solid heaps of dug-up couch grass roots and, in my case, two recently felled leylandii) is always wet in November. So how do you get that lot to burn? There are ways.

The first principle is not to attempt to start a bonfire after two weeks of rain. Instead, choose a day following a few days of wind, when your heap is as dry as it is likely to get. And choose a place where the wind can feed the fire; damp, enclosed corners of a garden are no place for reluctant fires.

Whatever you do, don't site the bonfire where it could suddenly flare up and spread. And don't place the fire too close to trees and shrubs, especially evergreens: a smouldering fire over a few days can damage roots.

You may say, like me, that it is going to be a small fire which cannot possibly scorch that nearby holly or berberis. But once the flames start to lick, even without the inevitable change in the direction of the wind, the demon in every gardener takes control. We put larger and larger branches on the fire, its base broadens. The flames mesmerise and before you know it you have a modest inferno.

The site of a recent bonfire is a difficult place to grow things again for a couple of years, because the soil is denatured by the heat. So, when siting

the fire, choose a place that is unimportant, or where you can replace the top few inches of soil before re-seeding.

But that's all later. We were talking about getting the bonfire going.

First make a heap of crumpled paper and wood or cardboard boxes, anything dry you can lay your hands on. And put on it as much dead, twiggy wood as you can find. Newly-cut twigs are not much help, however small, because they are still full of sap and need greater heat to catch fire.

Resist the temptation to put on evergreen prunings, unless they are long dead. Holly and yew may spit and crackle most cheerfully on an established fire, and shower sparks to heaven, but on a fire that has yet to get going the foliage quickly flares but the wood is slow to catch.

In the country, with fewer neighbours, an old tyre stuffed with petrol-soaked paper is a great fire-lighter, though it puts toxins into the ash as well as the air. An old gardener I used to

work with in Cambridgeshire years ago always swore by laying the firewood all in the same direction, like sardines in a tin. One end should face the wind, he said, so it could blow oxygen right into the heart of the fire. I agree with that, especially in the early stages. It also saves you from that messy, blackened, nightmare tangle if you have to start again.

As soon as the fire is nicely going, get some heavier wood on; this is what gives you real heat in the base of the fire. Use clean, straight lengths without side branches, so that they settle down into the base of the fire as they burn. When the materials used for the bonfire snag and prop each other up and cannot settle into the ash, the fire gets hollow and less inclined to work.

ONCE THE FIRE is well under way, any old stumps and chunks of heavy wood should be got on quickly, leaning them into the centre of the fire to char away. Logs also go on like sardines.

Now is the time to put on conifer prunings. The hotter the fire, the less the pall of white smoke. If smoke is an issue, feed it gradually rather than in a smothering layer. Let it burn down for ten minutes and come back to put some more on if it is getting too high or smokey. The trouble with fires is that it's so good to stand there, mesmerised, putting on more and more wood. Just another... and perhaps another...

When the wood is all on (and not before) put on discarded roots and weedy material, to steam away from the heat within. If you put these on sooner you deaden the fire; it will refuse to flare up and will take more wood.

Turn in the fire with a rake as it dies down, and leave it to char. Don't be in a hurry to clear the ash. If you leave it in a heap, stumps and logs will go on charring away for days, and you can sometimes dispose of further heaps of weeds on the heat.

Bonfires are considered less ecologically acceptable today, and putting the shorn foliage of a leyland cypress through a shredder provides a useful mulch for borders. On the other hand, a modest fire is a great chance to lose all kinds of vegetable rubbish which could otherwise hang around for years. So let the bonfire begin.



Autumn Leaves by Millais — when not everyone thought of using leaves for mulching and put them on the bonfire

WEEKEND TIPS

■ Pots of *Begonia sutherlandii* and *evansiana* should be allowed to die down under glass. Save the bulbils from the stem joints to produce extra plants next year.

■ If eel worm is a problem, lift tubers of Jerusalem artichokes and store in a dry, dark place. Or harvest fresh from the ground.

■ Remove leaves regularly from fine lawns and stack where they can rot down. (The addition of Biotol Compost Maker for Leaves speeds up the process.) Alternatively, spread the leaves under dense shruberies where they cannot blow out again. Rotary mowers set high can be used to vacuum up and shred leaves. (See leaf collectors on facing page.)

■ Continue to mow lawns, if necessary, with a light machine set high, in dry, windy weather. Collect all the clippings.

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The home where Peter Rabbit lived

During Beatrix Potter's stay at Loddendon Manor at the end of the last century, the tranquil setting of this Elizabethan house in the heart of Kent is thought to have inspired her to write *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*. The cabbage patch where Peter stole his carrots is long gone, but the view across the grounds is unspoilt by progress and could be yours for £1.3 million.

The house was built in 1560 by the Usbornes, wealthy merchants and bankers, and it stayed in the family until the 19th century. A history of the village of Staplehurst refers to Loddendon as "one of the most noteworthy timber-framed houses in the Weald", but when Mark and Alexandra Hoyle bought the Grade II* listed building two years ago, it had been empty for two years and was in a sorry state, complete with polystyrene false ceilings and a distressing 1970s kitchen with mushroom stools.

Mr Hoyle, a former commodities broker, set about the task of restoration with the determination you might expect from someone who has retired at the age of 36. An army of workmen descended on the house, rewiring, replumbing, carving, plastering and forging new bits and pieces to match the old ones. The attention to detail is astonishing.

So what do you get for your £1.3 million? Well, quite a lot, including nine acres, a swimming pool, a croquet lawn, a ghost and your own slice of history. The approach, through splendid wrought-iron gates (also listed and opened by remote control) is along a gravel drive flanked by duckponds. The house is topped by a white bell-tower.

The kitchen deserves a feature on its own. There are Tudor-style oak units with scratch carving by Turners of Lenham, granite work-surfaces and a Godin stove with four ovens. All the appliances, including an ice-maker in the utility room, are included in the asking price, and much of the £75,000 cost of the kitchen has been spent in hiding everything modern. This includes replacing radiators with underfloor heating beneath stone tiles. There is even another kitchen "for back-up when entertaining". Of course,



HOUSE OF THE WEEK

Loddendon Manor, Staplehurst, Kent • Price: £1.3 million
Setting: rural but only eight miles from M20 to London and Channel ports • **Shopping:** Tenderden, 12 miles away, has a good Waitrose, secondhand bookshops and furniture auctions



Loddendon Manor (top) has been restored with no expense spared. Inglenook fireplaces (left) feature prominently, while the kitchen (right) has granite work-surfaces, oak units and a giant stove

Someone once told me that the closer the timbers in a timber-framed house, the richer the person it was built for. This house is positively deckchair-striped. The oak front door, carved in a portulacis style, opens into the former Great Hall, now the main sitting room, where a log fire glows in the inglenook fireplace. On the day we visited, flowers and new-baby cards for the couple's two-week-old daughter sat on the sideboard and cocktails twizzled in an antique cage.

The carpets are all in subdued ice-cream shades, and each room leads subtly into the next with nothing to offend the eye. Mr Hoyle's collection of antique English furniture is bobbin-carved, handfold-pannelled and ivory-inlaid to within an inch of its life but unfortunately not for sale.

The dining room is delightful with its sloping floor. Mrs Hoyle's collection of blue-and-white china and a view of squirrels scampering into the branches of ancient trees.

The layout of the house is confusing at first. Mr Hoyle led me into a library, a morning room, a snooker room, a snug with another inglenook and a Gothic-style cloakroom, although not necessarily in that order. Under the stairs was a very large storage area.

A great shaggy head appeared over the half-door into the utility room — one of the Hoyle's four dogs. They have their own built-in wooden dog bed (included in the asking price) and with 18 acres

in which to chase squirrels, they must be in dog heaven.

Upstairs are not bedrooms but a warren of "suites", each with its own bathroom and dressing room or sitting room, sometimes both. There are doors opening on to hidden staircases, bedrooms tucked in the eaves and, even higher in the rafters, a massive room ideal for accommodating noisy teenagers.

The 20th century has hardly made its mark on the grounds. The satellite dish (for picking up

the Tokyo markets) is tucked neatly behind a box hedge and an original half-timbered barn constitutes the garage. There is a wonderful Venetian-canal folly that some romantic Usbornes put in after their wedding tour of Italy in the 18th century.

Out of sight of the house are the swimming pool and a modern poolhouse equipped with another snooker table, a bar and changing rooms.

The grounds are kept in tip-top condition singlehandedly by Mr

Hoyle, although should help be needed there is always a two-bedroom staff cottage.

It is hard to imagine why, after all this restoration, money and effort, the Hoyle's should want to leave Loddendon Manor. "I'm bored," Mr Hoyle says. "I want to start another project."

MARY GOLD

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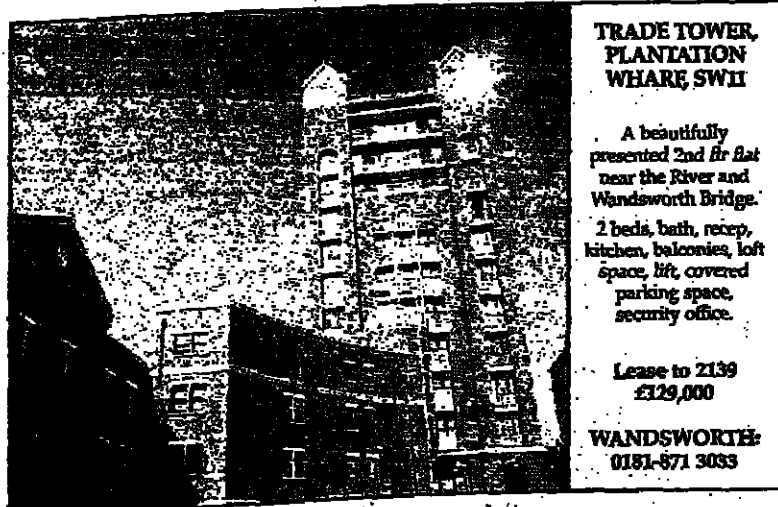
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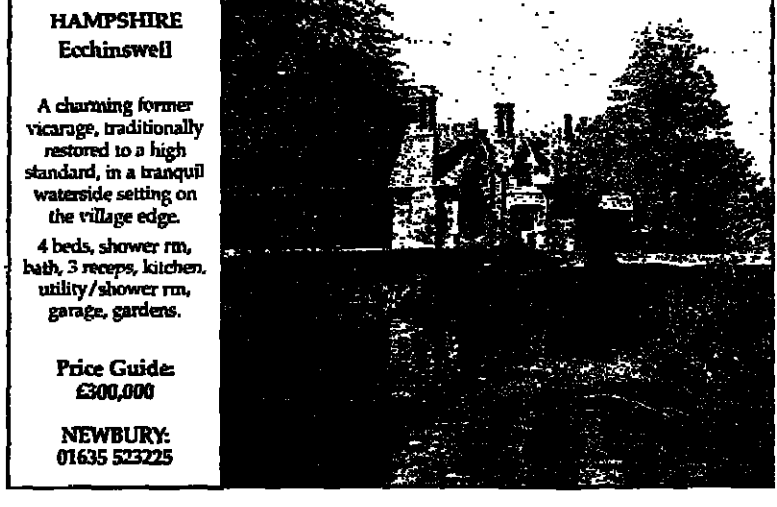
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Alarming ways to beat the burglar



Well-equipped housebreakers may be able to pick locks, says **CLARE STEWART**. But can they get past the sensors?

Hands up if you have ever ignored a ringing burglar alarm. Be honest. And how many times have you rushed to alert the police? Probably not often — unless the alarm is bawling out at 4am from the house next door, of course.

On the basis of this not uncommon response, and the statistics published this week showing that the police clear up less than a quarter of burglaries, you might be forgiven for avoiding the issue of home security. Yet, more homeowners are now fitting alarms to their properties. Between 1987 and 1995, the number of devices installed more than doubled, and around 20 per cent of British homes are now wired up to deter intruders.

This growth in the home security market is probably due to largely to the overall rise in crime figures during the past few years. In the year to June there were more than 1.2 million burglaries in England and Wales, with a further 74,000 in Scotland — food for thought if your house has insecure windows or a dodgy lock on the back door.

In response to the number of burglaries and to insurance companies' demands, preventative measures such as window locks, door chains and outside lighting have become more common.

It is difficult to quantify how effective all or some of these measures may be. According to figures from the 1996 British Crime Survey, more than half the

attempted break-ins to houses fitted with three or more security measures fail.

Such statistics are, as the survey admits, not absolutely conclusive. But they at least suggest that improving your home security really works.

"Alarms are an effective deterrent because many burglars are opportunistic and looking for a quick reward. They like soft targets," says Chris Swan, a spokesman for Chubb Security.

Having an alarm as well as other security measures can also save you money, as some insurance companies offer discounts on premiums according to the level of security you have. Cornhill Insurance, for example, offers discounts of 5 per cent if the house has adequate window locks and mortice deadlocks, while a 10 per cent discount applies if an alarm is fitted by an approved installer and there is a maintenance contract.

But insurers are unlikely to bother with such discounts if you live in a high-risk area, have been burgled frequently or have a house stuffed full of valuable antiques. In such circumstances they may well demand a minimum level of security, including an alarm, before taking on the business.

It is important to read the small print on insurance discounts, as they are not always worth having. If you forget to set your alarm before nipping to the shops and return to find that your house has been broken into, the insurer may



The trauma of finding your home ransacked, as depicted in the 1958 film *Passionate Summer*. An alarm system will deter opportunist thieves, if not the professionals

well charge you an excess fee of several hundred pounds when you put in your claim.

As with most things, you get what you pay for when it comes to installing an alarm. A fake box on the front of the house may fool some burglars some of the time, but professionals will know the difference.

It is possible to buy a complete alarm kit at DIY stores for less than £200. But such a kit, although effective up to a point, is unlikely to impress insurance companies if you have particularly valuable house contents or leave the house empty for long periods. Insurers will insist that alarm systems are installed and maintained by a company approved by the National Approval

Council for Security Systems (NACOSS).

NACOSS (01628 37512) is the security industry's regulatory body, with more than 700 registered installers. It can provide a free list of the firms which it recognises — a useful way to find the genuine security experts in your area.

A reputable company is unlikely to give you a quote over the phone. Most will send a surveyor to your house to design a tailor-made security system that takes into account factors such as access to the house, the layout of rooms and any pets you have which might accidentally trigger an alarm. There is usually no charge for this quotation.

For a small terraced house or

bungalow, you can expect to pay at least £600 plus VAT for what is called a bells-only system. Typically this would include a bell on the front of the house, movement detectors in the main rooms, a door contact on the front and back doors and a dummy box at the back of the house.

The next step up is a system linked to a monitoring centre. Home alarms are no longer directly connected to the local police station; instead the alarm sends a message to the monitoring centre which then alerts the local police.

The cheaper form of link to a centre is through a digital communicator which uses your

home phone line. On top of an installation fee, this is likely to cost at least £200 a year including monitoring charges. Some alarm systems may also require a separate phone line to be installed. The disadvantage of this form of system is that the link-up to the monitoring station will not work if the line is out of order, or is cut before the alarm is triggered.

To overcome this, a more sophisticated signalling system is offered through British Telecom called Telecom Red or Redcare. This is a continuous signalling system that also uses the home phone line but which will prompt an intruder alert even if the telephone line is cut.

To reduce the possibility of

false alarms, it is worth investing in sophisticated sensors that can detect both heat and movement and which can also be set to ignore a passing cat or dog.

The police will not respond to alarms from houses where there have been frequent false alerts. And if an alarm goes off at a time when their resources are particularly stretched, they may not give the alert top priority unless it is confirmed by a further signal from the house, or perhaps a neighbour's phone call.

Most modern systems can be upgraded to expand the area covered or to add additional functions such as panic buttons or fire detection. Regular servicing of all systems is essential to ensure their efficient operation.

FOR SALE

SURREY
Sally House, Ham Common, Richmond. Grade II listed 18th century house in just over an acre of part-walled gardens, overlooking Ham Common. Seven bedrooms, two bathrooms, drawing room, sitting room/study, dining room, kitchen, breakfast room, garden room, games room and cellar. Summer houses, two garages. About £925,000 (Strut & Parker, 0171-629 7282).

IRELAND
Marble House, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary. 18th-century house on the banks of the river Suir in 44 acres of gardens. Magnificent house converted into 12 self-contained apartments, an owner's suite and a 120-seat restaurant, with a conservatory by Richard Turner (who built the Palm House at Kew Gardens). Stable yard with seven stables, seven self-contained cottages and two guest lodges. About £975,000 (Sofelays International Realty, 0171-314 4443).

LONDON
33, Herford Square, South Kensington, SW7. Modernised family house with a large rear garden, overlooking and with access to Herford Square gardens. Five bedrooms, two bathrooms, drawing room, dining room, study, kitchen and store rooms. About £950,000 (John D. Wood, 0171-582 1484).

CHERYL TAYLOR

For those who buy to rent, market conditions have rarely been better

As happy as a landlord

Income opportunity: Paul Olins

As the revival of the residential property market gathers pace, many people are buying homes to let as an investment. Cheap loans and high rents are the incentives.

In the past, small investors were put off by expensive commercial mortgage interest rates charged by banks and building societies which were not keen to lend to people wanting to become landlords.

Now all that has changed. A Buy to Let Scheme has been launched by the Association of Relocated Agents and mortgage lenders including the Halifax, Homes Direct, Lloyds TSB and the Woolwich, aimed at encouraging people to buy homes to let.

The new scheme scraps loaded commercial interest rates and allows investors to borrow on the same terms as owner-occupiers. Mortgages with rates of below 7 per cent are available for up to 80 per cent of property value. Lenders will take rental income into account when working out how much can be borrowed. It will also be possible to take out multiple mortgages on several homes, which means you could build up a small portfolio.

Landlords will be able to offset mortgage interest against tax on rental income. Other expenses can also be offset against tax, including maintenance, gas and electricity, repairs, insurance and management charges.

The new assured shorthold tenancy has given landlords confidence that tenants will leave the property when they are meant to. Rent controls have been abolished and investors are free to charge market prices. There is also scope for long-term capital growth. This has led to more investors buying property to let and an increased supply of rented accommodation, but the number of people looking for homes is still great.

The stock of good-quality rental properties is running low, particularly in central London where rents are high — which is why Paul Olins decided to buy two small flats in the West End for renting out to provide an income.

Mr Olins, a company director, invested £90,000 of his own money in a one-bedroom flat on the second floor of a newly renovated Georgian building in Warren Street, and a similar amount in another small flat in a converted Victorian building in Wells Street, W1. The Warren Street flat is let on a two-year contract to a Swiss banker at £950 a month — a rental yield of 13.2 per cent. The Wells Street flat is on a 12-month contract to a building society surveyor at £866 a month — a rental yield of 11.5 per cent. Both properties were bought and let through Winkworths.

Mr Olins decided to invest in property last summer when prices hit rock

bottom. "Interest rates were low and with so much pent-up demand, values had to rise," he says.

"With high rents in many areas, buying to let seemed the obvious thing to do. The location is good, which makes them less likely to be affected by a downturn in the market. If you go for quality, you have a better chance of getting a good tenant."

But if demand for flats in central London remains high, there has been a move away from the centre in the past 12 months, with many young professionals looking to rent homes in less expensive districts.

Pimlico, Clapham, North Kensington, Shepherd's Bush, Streatham and Docklands, where property values are lower, are among the areas now more popular among tenants aged 25-35, and rental yields are rising. For example, a two-bedroom flat in Earl's Court costing around £130,000, with a rental value of £330 a week, achieves a gross rental yield of 10 per cent — higher than the 8 per cent achieved in nearby South Kensington, where property prices are more expensive.

In Streatham, investors are mopping up cheap, unmodernised flats, refurbishing them and letting them for an extended period. A shabby three-bedroom flat in a purpose-built block, recently sold for £31,500, grosses an

income of £650 a month with three sharers, says Winkworth.

Outside London, investors are cashing in on the demand for student accommodation in university towns and cities such as Oxford, Bristol and Exeter. In Exeter you can buy a house to accommodate five students for £47,000, which can be let for a combined rent of £212 a week for 42 weeks — a rental yield of 18.9 per cent — according to West Country agents Fulfords.

But would-be landlords must not allow the prospect of high rental returns to cloud their judgment. The 1996 Housing Act, which comes into force next year, allows landlords to repossess their property after a minimum of six months. Under current legislation, however, landlords must be careful to issue the proper "Section 20" notice at the beginning of the tenancy or they risk being lumbered with a sitting tenant.

It is important to use a reputable letting agent. Members of the Association of Residential Letting Agents (ARLA) are bonded, hold professional indemnity insurance, have been in business for at least two years and are kept up to date with the latest legal and regulatory requirements.

Most agents charge 10 to 12 per cent of the rent to find a tenant, take up references, hold deposits, serve notices and agreements. A full management service, which also includes collecting the rent and arranging for repairs, costs between 15 and 17 per cent.

If you do not use a letting agent, ask your prospective tenant for a reference from their last landlord and an employer's reference confirming their place of work — and follow them through.

You must get your sums right. Will the rent cover borrowings and costs, including letting and management fees, service charges and upkeep, after allowing for empty periods between lettings? Remember that mortgage rates could more than double, while fixed-rate loans only remain "fixed" for a few years. You may also need to budget for refurbishment and furnishing.

If you furnish your property with second-hand furniture or cast-off soft furnishings, you risk contravening the Fire and Furnishings regulations, which could result in a hefty fine or imprisonment. Furniture made since 1990 should carry a label saying it is fire-resistant. Antiques and pre-1950s furniture do not come under this ban.

In addition to the normal buildings and contents cover, you can insure against loss, damage, disappearing tenants and any legal costs involved in moving on tenants who do not pay their rent or do not leave when they are meant to — but premiums are high.

CHERYL TAYLOR

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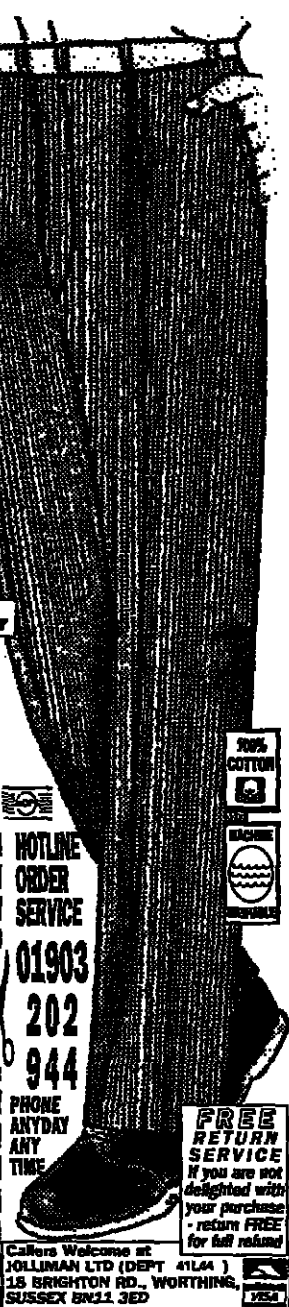
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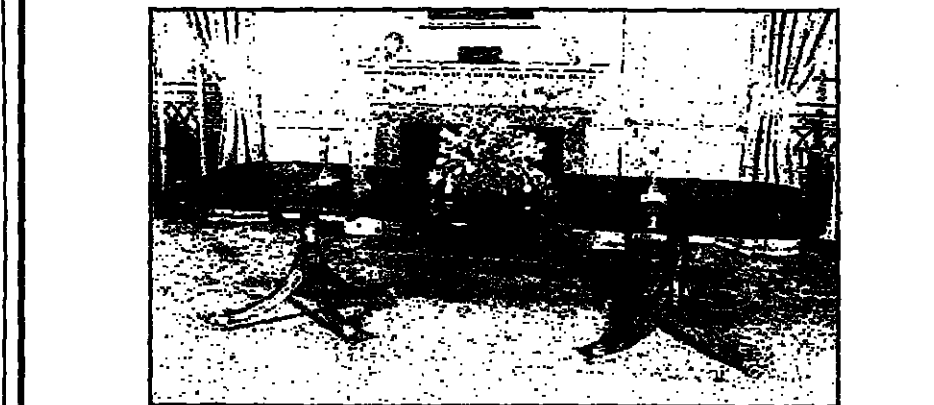
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The Gold & Silver Bureau make another remarkable find, this time in San Francisco...

By Joanne Glover

It is truly amazing that an original Mint-Sealed bag of authentic U.S. silver dollars, minted at the San Francisco Mint in 1881, should have survived all these years completely intact. Tucked away securely, they have come through both of the major earthquakes that have hit the beautiful City by the Bay this century, first in 1906 and again just a few years ago. Staff from the Gold & Silver Bureau were present when the original wire and lead-seal on the primitive canvas bag was cut to reveal these fabulous coins in what can only be described as breathtaking condition. All dated 1881, each coin bears the famous 'S' mintmark denoting it was struck at the world-renowned San Francisco mint, nearly 120 years ago. These frosted, pristine gems have to be seen to be believed. In years to come silver coins of this quality will always command healthy premiums over run-of-the-mill issues. Original U.S. Silver Cartwheels, as they were affectionately known in the Old West, are 90% pure silver and weigh 26.7 grammes and each is a full-sized silver Crown. If you act quickly you may be one of the fortunate few who can add one or more of these dazzling coins to your collection.

I've requested three and intend tucking them away to ensure they stay in their pristine original mint state. When you consider that in recent years the Royal Mint has charged nearly £30 for a modern British mass-produced silver crown, these antique gems look to me to represent tremendous value at the official distribution price of only £29.95 each, and that includes postage, packing, and secure Delivery.

Out of the original mint bag of 1000 coins, only 850 have been made available for the British market, a tiny number considering the phenomenal growth of interest in collecting top-quality coins. These historic mint grade coins are available strictly on a first come, first serve basis. You should try your luck too, who knows? You could be one of the lucky ones!

You can apply by post including your name, address and PostCode to The Gold & Silver Bureau, located at 3 Sevenways, Ilford, Essex IG2 6XH. If you don't mind a few engaged tones, you can get your application in quick by calling them today on their Freephone (0800) 614686. Don't send any payment initially, you will be notified if your application has been successful. You can also spread the cost by using one of your flexible friends, i.e. Mastercard or Visa credit cards.

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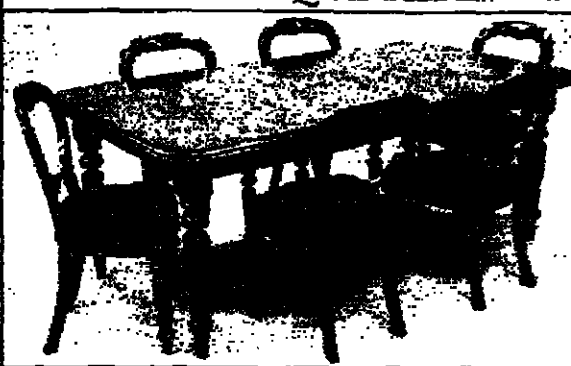
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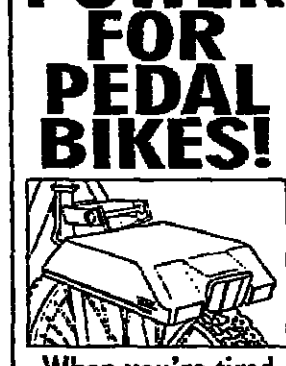
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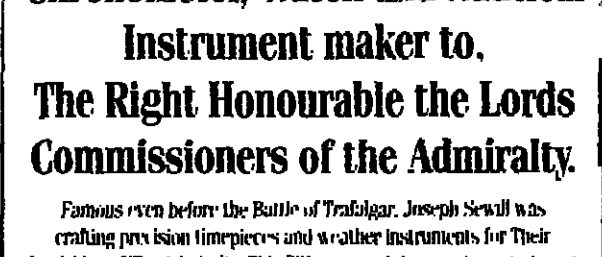
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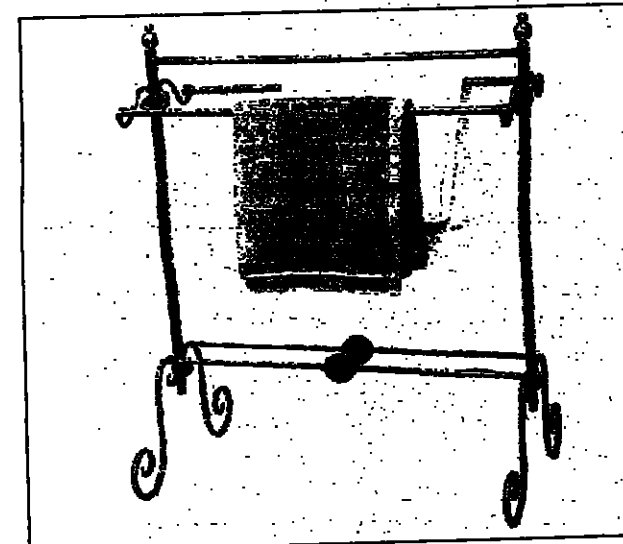
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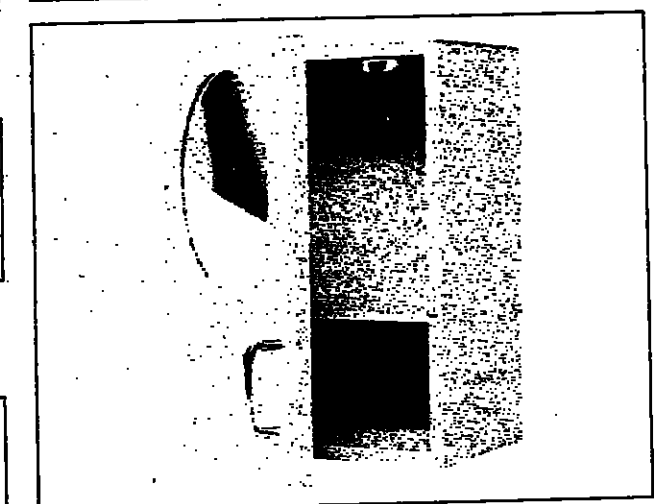
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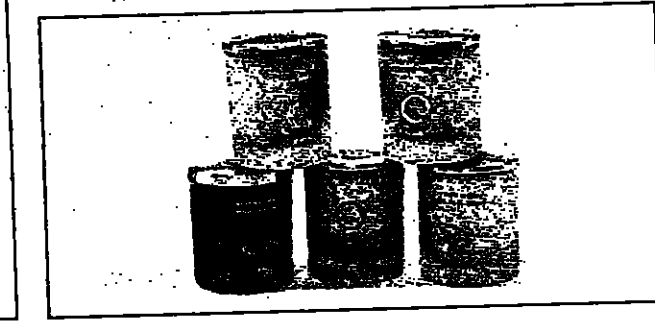
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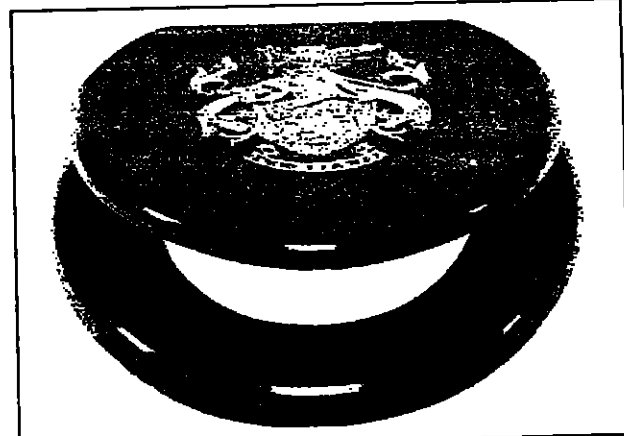
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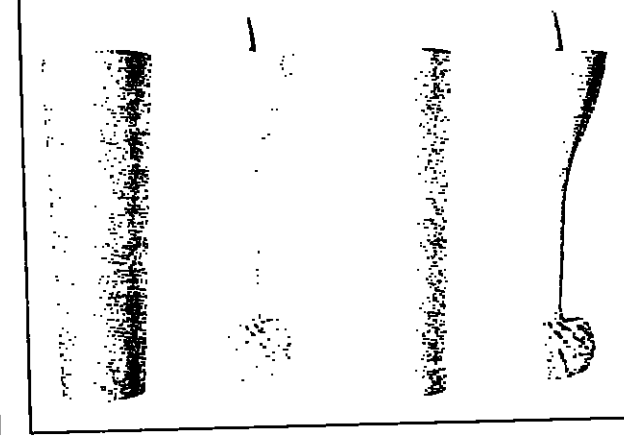
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The Holiday Inn syndrome

Many thousands of years ago a cave-man, a cave-woman and a cavechild were walking through the jungle. Suddenly the undergrowth ceased and before them, glinting in the antediluvian sunlight, stretched miles of unspoilt sand and sea.

The cave-man and his mate turned smiling towards the child. And the child said: "Take me back to the cave."

My children do it, your children do it: this perverse reverse-turn, this fierce desire not to experience what their parents want them to. Darwin probably had a phrase for it: natural rejection. I call it Arthur Ransome Syndrome, after the author of the books my children won't read.

In Robin Hood's Bay in Yorkshire stands a youth hostel: well run, comfortable beds, practically on a beach. We were there on a family fossilising expedition that had begun much further south at Kimmeridge, in Dorset. The idea was to demonstrate that the Kimmeridge ammonites are part of a Jurassic stratum that winds up the country, getting thin in the middle but widening around the Yorkshire coast where, magically, you can find the same fossils as in Kimmeridge.

Amazingly, the children had absorbed all this and were enjoying themselves. We sang *Here we come a-fossilising* on the beach (well, I did) and everyone was in good humour as we trooped into the hostel. We had a neglected, however, to book a family room. Eyes opened in horror at the thought of sharing with strangers.

Supper, too, was a little rough and ready for their taste, but worse was to come as we shuffled down, late as usual, in the morning.

PERSONAL LIFE

BY PETER BROWN

MARK BOURDILLON



Children always have to rebel — especially if it involves food

There was no choice of cereal. It was cornflakes or nothing. This, I must explain, was in direct contravention of family rule No 479, to the effect that, while on holiday, every child shall have access in the morning to a mini-packet of some Kellogg's cereal in which sugar is at least the second ingredient if not the first. (The rest of the year they get gruel.)

My daughter, aged eight, had had enough of all this. She turned to me, her eyes brimming. "Surely," she demanded loudly, "there must be a Holiday Inn somewhere around here?"

Her brothers seconded the motion. The other hostellers, most of them professional

fell-walkers, looked on askance. We wilted.

Spoilt? Not really. Mostly, we go camping. The Holiday Inn won its hallowed place not for its huge beds, nor for its television in every room, but for its breakfasts.

We once spent two nights in Naples in a Holiday Inn, while on a fast-finding visit to Pompeii, and the memory of the fruit juices, the infinite cereals, croissants and sticky buns, the milk, the honey and the many kinds of jam, all piled high like an endless harvest festival is with us still. (Of Pompeii they remember nothing.)

Small children have internal clocks that run on

gastric juice. Breakfast is a milestone. They do business at it, such as plea-bargaining for hamsters. They revel in it. That's why there are always Rice Krispies sticking to your feet in the kitchen.

Parents should not be downcast by infant rebellion but it does get to you. Our brood, for example, have always been denied sweets. Now their teeth are in varying states of decay, but they are all first-class at hiding the wrappers.

Take holidays: you like Bognor? Your offspring will plead for a trek around Nepal. If you go to Bognor, what they'll like best will be any disaster, however minor. Take television: you can ban it during the week, but they'll absorb *EastEnders* as if by osmosis, and at school they'll be the recognised experts on the Mitchells.

But it is food, inglorious food, that brings out the worst in them. One day they like eggs, next day they don't. Ditto tomatoes, cheese, pâté de foie gras, we've tried the lot in our time. We've made them make lists, we've let them finish, we've let them go hungry, we have agonised. But what they really like is bubble gum, Coco Pops and small sticky things that are advertised when you're not watching.

To parents and children alike, eating has a secret dimension. Parents see it as something that has to be sorted out early on. Children, conversely, need to express their right to choose. They'll find out what you approve of and eat the opposite. I imagine cavechildren were the same — "Don't want mammoth, gummy dinosaur!" And chips, of course.

One thing's for sure: they'll never call my lot anorexic. Not if there's a Holiday Inn in town.

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Relax. You don't have to be brave to explore Guatemala, says **EDWARD MARRIOTT**

Three years ago a friend of mine went travelling in Guatemala. Late at night she was woken by gunfire in the street outside. Terrified, she hid under the bed. A machine-gun raked the hotel, windows were smashed and the ceiling of her room was drilled with holes. The next morning, shaken but unharmed, she booked the first flight home.

Guatemala, despite its postcard-friendly Indians and colourful markets, has lurched through edgy, dangerous periods. For many years the Indian guerrillas have struggled with governments they claim have been corrupt and undemocratic; regrettably, tourists have occasionally been caught in the crossfire.

Not unnaturally, this has deterred many visitors. The correlation, of course, is that if you decide to go, you will never feel as though you are walking an over-trodden path.

This is a beautiful and picturesque country with friendly, curious people and a fascinating, still-live history.

Often, even the most striking spots seem as though they have been visited rarely. The most memorable, without doubt, is Lake Atitlán, a 15km-wide freshwater lake ringed by volcanoes and four hours' drive from Guatemala City, the capital. Even in the post-Christmas high season, the ferries across the lake were near-empty; the hawkers in the gateway village, Panajachel, were consequently desperate for custom.

Atitlán merits a stay of a week or more. Devotees return year after year and a few, taking advantage of Guatemala's relaxed regulations on foreign ownership, even buy land along the lake front.

With days in hand, you can travel its entire circumference, spending a night in each village. This is Guatemala in the round, the country in microcosm.

Most visitors arrive in Panajachel down breathtaking switchbacks from the Panamerican Highway. The town (pronounced Pana-hashell) was once an unassuming little *méjole* of Cakchiquel Indians, but it is now the tourist hub of Atitlán. Most visitors go no further, although some take a day trip to the fabulous market at Chichicastenago, two hours north into the highlands.

But venture beyond Panajachel across the azure water and suddenly, magically, the lake becomes yours. Surrender to its rhythms, let the people guide you: above all, do not rush.

First stop, Santa Cruz. The village is half a mile up the



In the market at Chichicastenago, women in their bright and colourful huipiles or shawls sell all kinds of local produce. The village is a two-hour drive north of Panajachel into the Guatemalan highlands

hill behind and the jetty is overlooked by three palm-roofed guesthouses, which are all cheap and friendly. This is a gentle inauguration: mornings start clear, cool and still, the surface of the lake a metallic mirror of the deepening sky; by midday the wind creates a gentle chop on the water and the sun is burning. Gum and banana trees run down to the shore.

The village, where women in bright scarlet huipiles (shawls) seem engaged in endless rounds of clothes washing, climbs up through dusty paths past a white-washed church, into straggly coffee plantations. For those who prefer the horizontal, the shore path winds on.

This, the west side of the lake, is the least built up and the villages are connected by

a single-track path. Some are too small for hotels; most have a *hospedaje* (guest-house) or two. The walk between, with the volcanoes constantly in sight, is truly breathtaking.

San Marcos, three hours' scramble along a narrow path from Santa Cruz, is fast being developed. Lost in the labyrinth of coffee bushes that run down to the shore are five guesthouses, most owned and run by eccentric Europeans.

The weirdest by far is Las Pirámides, a meditation retreat where every building is pyramid shaped and the Swiss cook sleeps in a tree house. Two American brothers we met, who had bought a plot of lakeside land the year before, had now returned to discover that "their" land had since

changed hands three times, the mayor pocketing a commission each time. But at the moment the village is quiet and largely pre-electric, the only noise at night is from teenagers' firecrackers.

The idyll, however, is not flawless. Swimming in the lake off San Marcos I was approached by a fisherman. He grew solemn when asked about his catch: he had been out since dawn and still nothing. The black bass, he explained, which was introduced as a sport fish in the 1960s, had long ago eaten the crabs and smaller fish and disappeared to the depths.

Development, although still minuscule, is gearing up. Scattered along the more deserted stretches of shore are glass-fronted holiday houses with sprinklered lawns and full-time, uni-

formed security guards: weekend retreats for Guatemala City's richest.

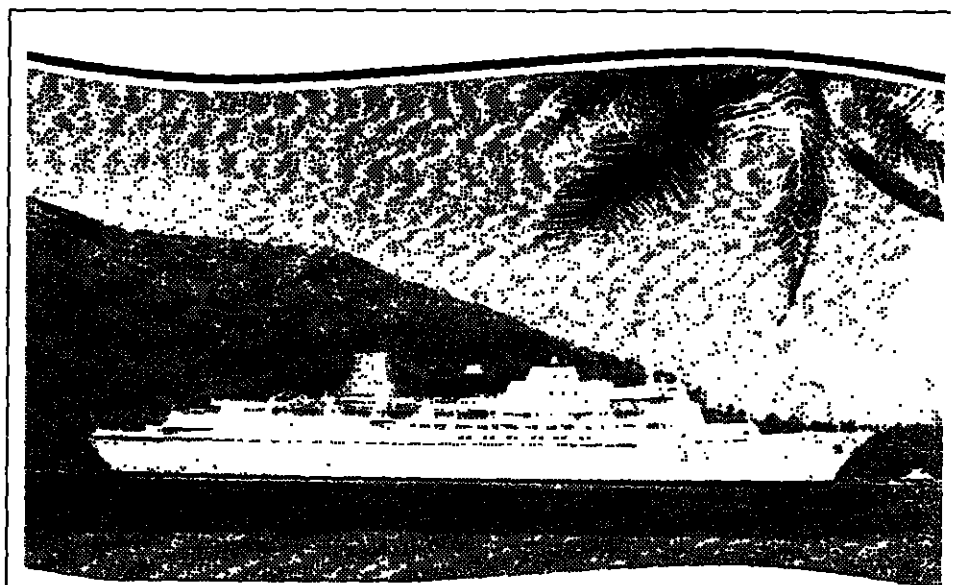
San Pedro and Santiago Atitlán, on the south side of the lake, are larger and accessible by a tarmac road. San Pedro, the smaller of the two, is a dusty, flyblown place that is developing a reputation as something of a hippy town, with marijuana sold over the counter in bars. More interestingly, it is the starting point for Atitlán's most impressive walk: the four-hour climb up the 3,000m San Pedro volcano.

Santiago Atitlán, 10km on, is a more diverse, traditional village. Spend the night here and you will likely be the only visitor. But its tranquility, as so often in Guatemala, belies a bloody recent past. The army, accusing the residents of supporting the guerrillas, established a base here in the early 1980s and throughout the decade villagers were abducted and murdered.

In 1990, after drunken soldiers shot and killed a villager, the local population petitioned successfully for the base to be closed.

On our last night on Atitlán the lake was alive with celebration: new mayors were being inaugurated in all the villages. Booming firecrackers echoed round the mountains. The perfect night, I remember thinking, for a guerrilla attack. Then, without warning, a dark figure emerged from the undergrowth and lobbed something towards me. I hit the ground. It exploded behind me; small particles hit the back of my head.

Children's laughter erupted. I stood up, feeling my head for wounds, extracting sticky lumps from my hair: orange peel. I had been attacked by an exploding citrus fruit. On this night that was as dangerous as it was going to get.



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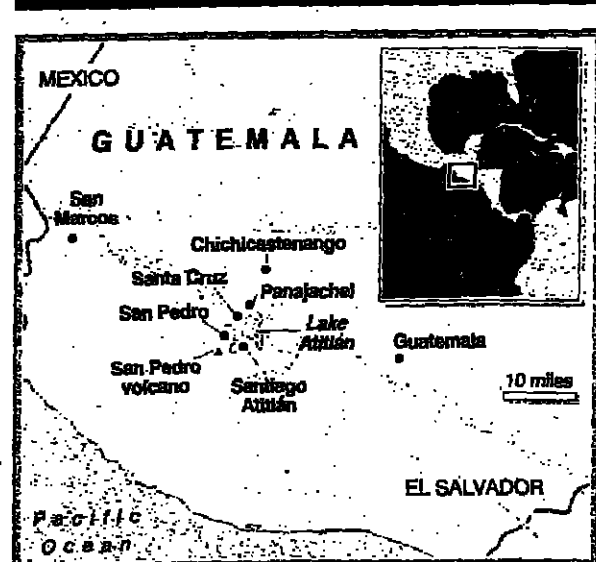
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and Belize (£9.99) along with the Rough Guide Spanish phrase book. The best travel book, even after 60 years, is Aldous Huxley's *Beyond the Mexican Bay* (Flamingo, £6.99, ISBN 0-58608 481 9).

Accommodation: the quality of guesthouses changes so quickly that it is unwise to recommend particular ones, especially in Panajachel where the cheapest accommodation (about £3-

£4 per night for a double room) is "rooms": simply check out a few and choose the nicest. In Santa Cruz, stay at the Hotel Arca de Noé (double cabins, £15 a night). Supper is excellent and eaten communally. Booking is advisable, but they have no phone. Write to Hotel Arca de Noé, Santa Cruz la Laguna, Solola, Guatemala.

Vaccinations: typhoid, tetanus, polio and hepatitis are required, plus malaria tablets.

When to go: best weather is during our winter; our summer is their rainy season. In January, temperatures in Atitlán average 27C.

Further information: in the absence of an official tourist office, South American Experience, 47 Causton Street, London SW1 4AT (0171-976 5511) runs a helpful information service and organises tours.

Getting there: cheapest flights to Guatemala City are Iberia via Madrid at £547 return. Continental via Houston, £547 return. American Airlines, £581 return. All prices include taxes. No visa is needed.

Transport to Atitlán: a hire car from the airport (ideally booked before leaving, see South American Experience below) will cost about £35 a day for a Nissan saloon. If your flight arrives in the morning it is more fun, and considerably cheaper at about £3, to take a bus. Direct buses take four hours and leave from Transportes Rebuli, 21 Calle 1-54, Zona 1 from 6am to 4pm. Or take any western highlands bus from the Zona 4 terminal and change at Los Encuentros.

Books: Sarah Anderson of the Travel Bookshop (0171-229 5260) recommends the *Rough Guide to Guatemala*

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America's southern states: From Graceland to Dixieland, Peter Stothard tours Tennessee and the Carolinas...

From the King's palace to Wolfe's lair



The American novelist Thomas Wolfe spent his childhood in a 29-room boarding house which still stands among the offices, magic shops and "check-your-gun-at-the-door" restaurants of Asheville, North Carolina. During the depression years, Mrs Wolfe's customers were charged a dollar a day for bed (a shared bed if the place was full) and modest board. Nearby, at the same time, another writer, F. Scott Fitzgerald, was in accommodation costing some 30 times as much at the giant and luxurious Grove Park Inn, which also still stands today and whose hall fireplaces, 36 feet across, could hold at least three of Mrs Wolfe's bedrooms.

Dixieland, the name that Wolfe gave to his home in his best-known novel, *Look Homeward, Angel*, was built to make money, to fund the dreams of a woman whose share of the family imagination was directed into property speculation. Grove Park, by contrast, was built to consume the fortune that its eccentric owner had amassed from the highly profitable Grove's Tasteless Chill Tonic and Grove's Luxative Bromo Quinine. Both establishments are well worth a visit from travellers to this romantic town in the American south east; both aim to create much the same impression as they did on the day they first opened for business.

Visitors have always come to these southern highlands for the same reason. You would have to be exceptionally devoted to the work of Thomas Wolfe to make a special journey to Asheville to see his clapperboard home and museum: there are some, however, who do and, according to the guide, they are quite as fiercely devoted as the acolytes of those other wolves, Humbert and Virginia. You would have to be quite unusually obsessed by architectural oddity and the Scott/Zelda phenomenon to make a special journey from England to the Grove Park Inn. But if you need height and sweet air in the humid



Newcomers to Presley's old home at Graceland find it a surprisingly small. Inside, the dining table seems tiny in comparison with the exploits that are supposed to have taken place around it in Elvis's day

southern summer, Asheville is a joy. Whether, like the Dixieland clientele, you are escaping from the sickness of inner-city Pittsburgh, or whether, like the drink-raddled Fitzgerald, you are escaping the literary clubs of New York, or whether, like us this summer, you are resting after a week of Nashville theme parks and Elvis Presley worship, the natural appeal remains the same.

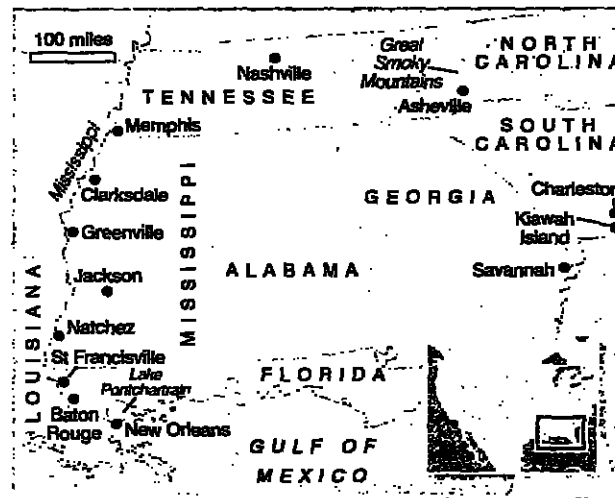
We arrived there, two adults and two children aged eight and 12, in the middle of a three-week August holiday sweep through Tennessee and the Carolinas to Savannah, Georgia. We flew from

London to Charlotte and on to Memphis. This was our base for seeing the memorials to the King of Rock'n'Roll and that even bigger King of American race relations, Martin Luther Junior. We then left the Mississippi and drove to Nashville, which now boasts not only its make-your-own-country-record booths and the massive Opryland Hotel complex but the world's only full-size reconstruction of the Athenian Acropolis.

Our route took us next through the Alpine-like town of Gatlinburg in the Great Smoky Mountains, Asheville, Charleston, the Kiawah Island wilderness resort and post-Olympic Georgia.

We were forewarned of the heat, the distances and the boredom suffered by children in cars. But with help from the air-conditioned American automobile, frequent freeway stops and some unusually wet weather on the higher ground, the travelling was fine. The hot weather was most intense at the start of the trip.

While about 1,000 visitors a year troop through Mrs Wolfe's kitchen in Asheville more than 60 times as many visit Mr Presley's home in the Memphis suburbs. Go early in the day to avoid the grilling wait for the shuttle-bus from the



car park. And remember that you do not need to allow too long for the tour. King Elvis had a surprisingly small palace. Graceland, no grandiose piece of architecture this, would not look out of place on the outskirts of Manchester or Guildford. The glass dining table seems tiny in comparison with the exploits that are supposed to have taken place around it, the swimming pool hardly large enough for the obese later Elvis to take a bath.

All the famed paraphernalia are there, the jungle room recording studio lounge, the green-carpeted ceiling, the TCB and thunderbolt insignia. (Taking Care of Business in a flash, as the guides patiently ex-

plain) which is planted on every possible surface from aircraft tailplane to grave-stone. The one flash not allowed is photography: the Presley estate is perturbed that excessive light will damage the delicate curtain fabrics. Maybe.

Most visitors would not be too disappointed if the precise shade of polluted river green on the shag-pile were lost. Their ears are plugged into their Walkmans; their hips are swaying (Elvis-lovers of both sexes boast some of the largest hips in the world) and their minds are with the man and not the mansion.

Anyone who wants to take Elvis involvement a little further can visit the dives of

Beale Street where the great man cut his first demonstration record and where his followers today do the same. Just around the corner is the Peabody Hotel, whose recovery to its old splendour is an indicator of the whole city's escape from racial and economic catastrophe. At 11am each day, the pampered Peabody ducks leave the lettuce and strawberries of their rooftop home and descend in the elevator with their liveried Duckmaster for the red-carpeted walk to the hotel lobby fountain. Every morning and evening the duck marches attract appreciative crowds.

In the 1960s, neither Elvis Presley nor Martin Luther King would have been too welcome at the Peabody. Elvis took breakfast at the nearby Arcade Café while Dr King stayed at the Lorraine Motel. The balcony on which he was shot dead in 1968 is the second biggest local tourist attraction, marked by a wreath, a civil rights museum and a camp site of black protesters complaining that the event was not one which Memphis should choose to promote.

As well as men who outshine their monuments, there are monuments that far outshine their makers. In 1897 Major E.C. Lewis, a Nashville railway owner, built his city a full-sized model of the Parthenon as a

temporary attraction for its centennial. His fellow citizens decided that they liked it: the stone replacement for Lewis's work is still being enhanced today. The latest addition is a full-sized 42-foot representation of the Athene Parthenos statue, recreated here from ancient descriptions and Roman models in the past ten years.

Once only scholars could argue about the details of Phidias's lost masterpiece. Now the controversies have a full physical form and, more importantly, visitors can sense the true awesome face of Europe's most famous architectural structure: all in Nashville, Tennessee.

George Vanderbilt was not a railroad tycoon himself. He was not even as much of a natural speculator as Mrs Wolfe. But he did spend a magnificent quantity of his family's railway-earned fortune on the largest family house ever built in America, just a few miles from Dixieland and the Grove Park Inn. Biltmore, designed in Loire chateau style, stands with Graceland and The White House in the top three most visited houses in the US. Although the contents are of no great interest, the walnut library, with its Venetian ceiling by Pellegrini, is a room to kill for. Henry

James, who in 1905 had to walk half a mile from his bedroom to borrow a book from the "mile-long" shelves, almost did.

After the first week our holiday developed into two parallel tours. The first was of houses, hotels and museums, from Biltmore through to Charleston Place in the 18th-century heart of South Carolina and the English city squares of Savannah. The second was of white-water raft trips, balloon journeys and searches for alligators, rare birds and spiders on the sand dunes of Kiawah. Judicious lane-changes from one tour to another allowed harmony between children and parents to be maintained — almost all of the time.



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Beale Street in Memphis, Tennessee

Getting there: BA flights Gatwick-Charlotte are from £326 return (travelling on weekdays, tickets booked 21 days in advance, one week minimum stay). Return flights at weekends start from £356. From around £387 plus £22.70 tax, you can book London-Charlotte-Memphis.

Where to stay: Memphis: The Peabody Hotel, 901-526-4000. Nashville: Opryland Hotel

and theme park: 615-889-1000. Gatlinburg: chalets for rent from \$85 to \$550 per night. For camping information camping call 423-436-6000. To rent camping equipment, call The Happy Hiker on 423-436-6000. Asheville: Grove Park Inn, 704-252-2711. Biltmore Estate, 704-255-1139. Kiawah Island: beach apartments, nature trails, oyster barbecues, 803-766-2121.

What to see and do: Parthenon, Nashville, 615-862-8431. Thomas Wolfe museum, Asheville, 704-253-8304. Graceland, Memphis 901-332-3322.

Whitewater rafting at the Nantahala Outdoor Centre, 704-488-2176. Ballooning at Mount Pisgah Balloons 704-667-9943. Charleston Place for antebellum charm, Charleston, 803-722-4900.

Reading: The Picador Book of Blues and Jazz, ed. James Campbell (Picador, £7.99, ISBN 0 330 34445 5). A Turn in the South, by V.S. Naipaul (Penguin, £7.99, ISBN 0 14 0114947). Below the Mason-Dixon line - Old Glory, by Jonathan Raban (Picador, £6.99, ISBN 0 330 292293).

Life on the Mississippi, by Mark Twain (OUP, £5.99, ISBN 0 19 2818481). Look Homeward Angel, by Thomas Wolfe (Penguin, £8.99, ISBN 0 14 0181938). Guides: Fodor's The South (Tennessee, North Carolina, South Carolina, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia), £13.99, ISBN 0 679 030735. Insight Guide New Orleans, £12.99, ISBN 0 62421 1558.

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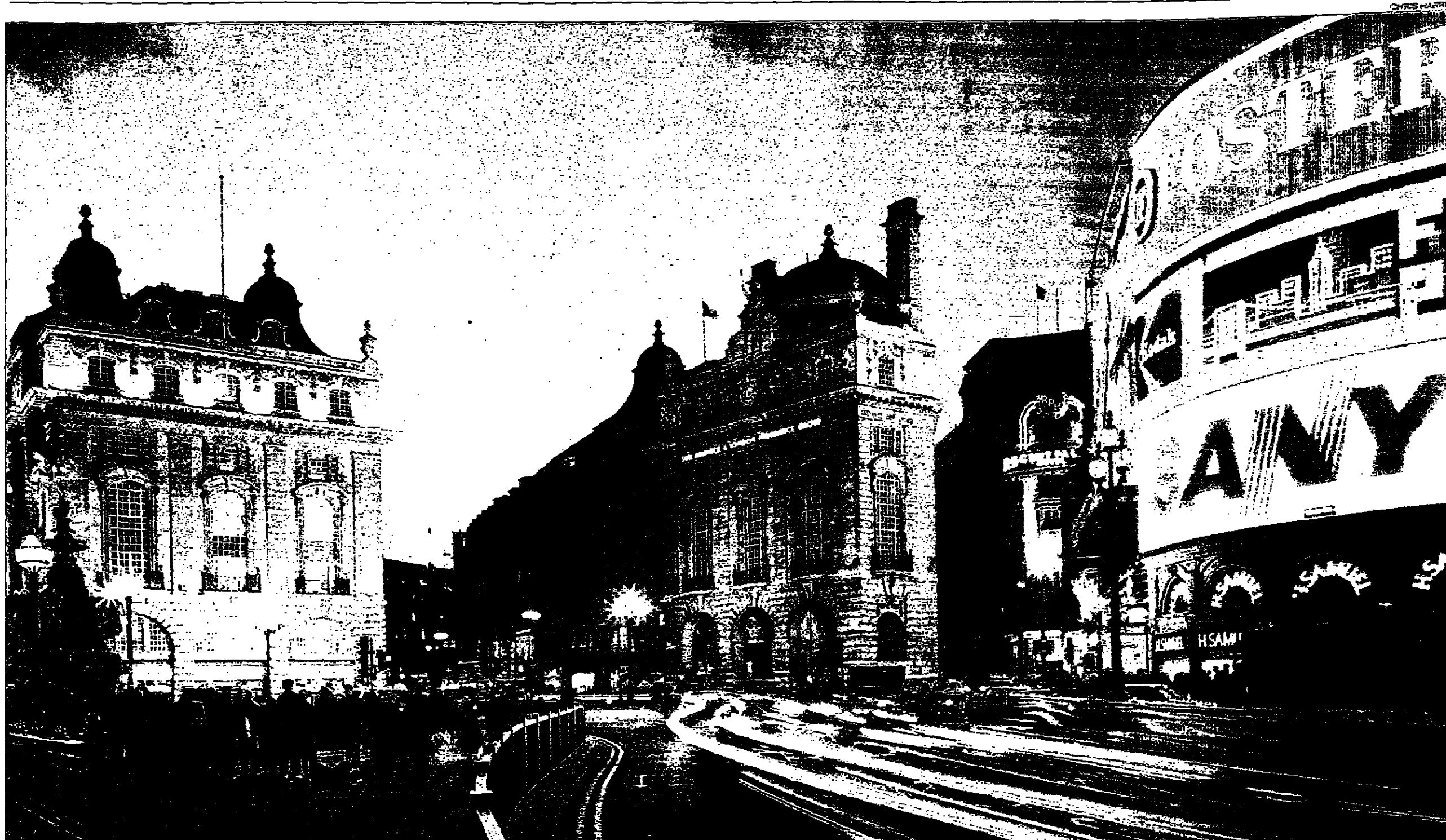
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London: The capital was praised this week as the coolest, most energetic and exciting city in the world...



Piccadilly Circus at dusk. Visitors heading for the bright lights to shop or take in a show may be horrified by luxury hotel prices — but with a little research you can stay conveniently close to the West End, in comfort, for a modest sum

For a mere £2,100 a night plus £367.50 VAT, visitors to London can stay in the capital's newest and most expensive suites on the top floor of Claridge's hotel in the heart of Mayfair. For that you get two large bedrooms with private dressing rooms, kitchen, dining and sitting rooms, along with rooftop views over the city. And a private lift and a personal butler as well.

Yet while London has plenty of luxury hotels such as Claridge's, it has a surprising shortage of good-quality budget hotels. "There is a healthy demand for properties offering rooms at rates under £70 per night. And if customer demand cannot be satisfied, then visitors will look elsewhere," says Sir John Egan, chairman of the London Tourist Board.

According to the LTb, at least another 10,000 hotel rooms will be needed to meet anticipated demand before the end of the decade.

For now, though, finding a hotel that suits your budget and requirements can be daunting, especially for the first-time visitor. But with some advance planning it is possible to have a good time in town without breaking the bank.

The key is to identify in advance what you want from your trip to London. Is it to see the sights? To go shopping? Or take in a show? How far are you prepared to travel — the further away from the centre of London,

Budget nights on the town

the cheaper the room rates. Are you happy with taking a Tube back to the hotel at night, or will your budget stretch to a taxi? Price is probably the most important factor for many people coming to London for a break, although location runs it a close second. The new Rotherhithe Youth Hostel (0171-232 2114), for example, can provide accommodation at £22.75 per person per night, including breakfast, in a two-bedded room, but it is not particularly convenient for central London. A better option, also at £22.75 per night, is the Carter Lane Youth Hostel (0171-236 4965) close to St Paul's Cathedral in the City of London, although it is extremely popular and can be difficult to get into.

For those looking for more of a hotel atmosphere, expect to pay at least £50 to £70 for a two-person room in a small B&B-style hotel in the central area. Woodville House in Ebury Street (0171-730 1048), near Victoria Station, is a small (12 rooms) hotel offering clean and simple accommodation. Although guests share a bathroom and have no lounge, there is access to a small kitchen. Twin or double rooms cost from £54 a night, while large family rooms are priced from £64.

The owners of this hotel have

recently expanded with another property, the Morgan Guest House, also in Ebury Street (0171-730 2384). The 1997 Which? Hotel Guide rates this 11-room property highly: "Plans are afoot to start work on the garden, after which the hotel would be a near-perfect base for sightseers on a budget." Prices range from £58 to £75 for a twin or double and from £68 to £98 a night for a family room.

For about £70-£90 a night per room, there are also a number of larger hotels that offer good-value weekend breaks in this price range, although their location tends to be away from the more fashionable parts of town. The three-star Royal Scot Hotel at King's Cross, for example, has a weekend rate of £36 per person per night (£72 for a room), including breakfast, when booked through the Highlife Breaks leisure brochure (0800 700 400). This is a 351-room

HOTELS AND SELF-CATERING



Morgan Guest House, SW1, charges from £29 per person

modern-looking hotel which largely caters for the business market during the week and offers the convenience of a restaurant and coffee shop within the hotel.

The Bayswater area of west London also has a number of good-value properties. The recently refurbished Comfort Inn Hyde Park (0171-262 6644), built out of former townhouses and close to Lancaster Gate Tube, has a weekend rate of £35 per person

per night. All the 60 bedrooms are clean and comfortable with en suite bathrooms, and there is a restaurant and bar.

The better the area in terms of shopping and sightseeing, the higher the price. Hence the special weekend break prices move up a notch at the Kensington Palace Hotel (0171-937 8121), close to High Street Kensington, to £50 per person per night or £55 per person per night at the refurbished Mount Royal Hotel (0171-629 8040), just off Oxford Street.

Hotels generally have special rates for children, although some have fairly complicated rules. Most are prepared to let children aged up to 15 stay free in their parents' room if there is space, or give a discount on a separate room if available. Some also allow children to eat free or charge only a small fee.

The new Holiday Inn Weekend Plus programme, however,

has probably the strangest definition of children of any hotel chain in the capital, since it allows them up to the age of 19 to stay in their parents' rooms. Room rates at the Holiday Inn, King's Cross (0171-833 3900), for example, are £110 per night, which could work out to be good value if you can stand having older teenage children in the same room.

Travel agents should be able to find the best deal on offer at any given time from London hotels, including those that provide theatre tickets or other added-value benefits such as museum admissions (see our special breaks section on the opposite page). Otherwise, short-break operators such as Highlife, Superbreak (0161-238 5257) and First Option Leisure Breaks (0345 565657) can help.

The London Tourist Board has an accommodation booking service (0171-824 8844) and publishes a guide entitled *Where to Stay in London*, which is available from bookshops at £2.95.

For those planning to come to London more than once a year, including the occasional business trip, Hotel Express (0171-924 3366) can offer up to 50 per cent off standard rates at about 40

London hotels. Membership of Hotel Express (which acts like an airline flight consolidator and takes up slack capacity in hotels) costs from £50 a year, although Hotel Express points out that this can be recovered from just one night's stay at a four-star London hotel at a 50 per cent rate.

Visitors to London wanting to stay for more than just a few nights might consider self-catering in a serviced apartment, although these are more usually aimed at business travellers. The Orion London (0171-566 8000), for example, is a French-owned apartment hotel close to the Barbican and has a nightly rate for a studio for two people of £78, including a fully equipped (but small) kitchen. The Apartment Service (0181-944 1444) publishes a useful free directory which includes many of these London self-catering apartments.

Probably the best-value budget hotel within London, however, is the new Formule One at Barking (0181-507 0789), about 30 minutes by Tube from central London, which is being officially opened tomorrow.

The 80-room high-tech hotel — check-in is via an automatic machine to keep prices down — costs £22.50 per room per night, with rooms accommodating up to three people. Already highly successful in France, the Formule One Barking is the 312th property in the group to open worldwide but the first in London.

DAVID CHURCHILL



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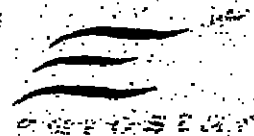
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Rich pickings, tasty treats

BARGAIN RESTAURANTS

London is an international destination of gastronomic excellence. Its restaurants unrivalled for choice anywhere in the world. Incredible as that statement might have appeared as recently as, say, five years ago, there is an even more preposterous truth to follow: eating out in London does not have to be expensive.

There are, though, pass-words to the city of cheap eats. Here are a few of the most useful: **Pierre Victoire**, **Pizza Express**, **Stockpot**, **Sofra**, **Café Flo**, **Pret à Manger**, **Café Aroma**. Let me decode them.

Pierre Victoire is a remarkably useful chain of inexpensive, franchised bistros started by French chef Pierre Levisy. He requires his operators to prepare their meals from a repertoire of 500 recipes of his own devising, and to sell three-course lunches for £4.90 and three-course dinners for £9.90. Some branches, under the **Pierre Lapin** label, are vegetarian and offer main courses to suit vegans. The chain has quickly grown and branches are now strategically sited throughout London. The restaurants have a soup-kitchen informality, but the (cosmopolitan) service is friendly and the food usually perfectly acceptable.

Pizza Express is simply the best of London's pizza chains. Although its founder, Peter Bozot, has retired, the company's standards have triumphantly survived and the chain now numbers more than 30 restaurants. One, for example, is suspended near the Museum of London over the busy thoroughfare of London Wall. Perhaps some of the older establishments, particularly the converted dairy at the corner of Coptic and Little Russell Streets near the British Museum and the Dean Street branch in Soho, are still the most evocative. The pizzas, in any case, are terrific.

Stockpot is a descendant of the original Terence Conran catering enterprise. Anthony Furnival, who managed one of Conran's highly economical Soup Kitchens in the 1950s, struck out on his own and carried the cheap food formula forward until he sold the restaurants to his staff in the 1980s. There are seven survivors, although one in King's Road is called **Chelsea Kitchen** and another in Panton Street, West End Kitchen. Standards vary, but stick to simple dishes and the average bill will not much exceed £5. Set lunch in Basil Street, near Harrods, for example, is £3.50 for two courses.

Sofra is the most recently expansionist chain, having reached a complement of four restaurants and eight café-bistros, all Turkish in cuisine. In Tavistock Street, Covent Garden, for example, the £5 menu allows customers to have two or three courses served with chips or rice, plus bread and olives. Recommended: parsley



You don't have to be upper crust to eat here: Pizza Express in Dean Street, Soho, one example of what is 'simply the best pizza chain in London'

salad, falafel, manca (spinach in fresh yoghurt with garlic), hummus or taramasalata, followed by grilled lamb fillet, chicken casserole or ink (lamb knuckle stew). **Café Flo**, with seven addresses around London, produces authentic-looking French bistros with a genuine French café ambience, and food (at £6.95 for two courses and coffee) that is at least good enough to beat most other would-be Gallic chains. (The one to avoid in this genre, in my sad experience, is **Café Rouge**, another rapidly expanding chain, but this time one where the food and service are much less stylish than the décor.)

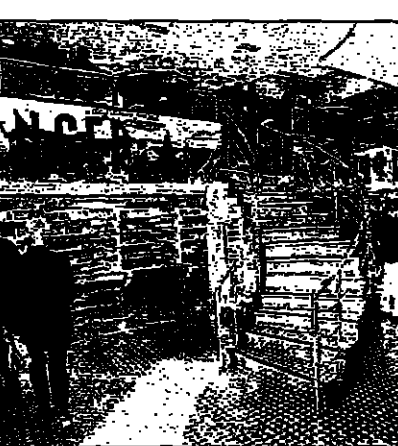
The fastest-growing chain of all is **Pret à Manger**, which seems almost ubiquitous in the central areas of the capital. It is a chain of stylish sandwich bars with attitude. Not only sandwiches but also sushi, sashimi, noodle-based dishes, cakes, baked desserts and proper espresso and cappuccino. The quality is good, the choice wide, the décor stylish and the commitment to high, additive-free standards is publicly stated on every window.

Café Aroma is an enterprising and still newish chain with a knack for find-

ing niches within or adjacent to tourist attractions (such as the South Bank Centre) throughout London. The motif is fast food served with bright colours and music, and includes simple but stylish snacks, sandwiches and cakes to be eaten in or carried away.

There are other establishments that do not share such common ownership or affiliation, but commend themselves to those on a budget because of the economical food they serve. The top names in the fish and chips genre are **Nautilus** at 27-29 Fortune Green Road, NW8; **Sea-Shell** at 49-51 Lisson Grove, NW1; **Geales** at 2 Farmer Street, W8; **Faulkner's**, 424-426 Kingsland Road, E8; and the **Upper Street Fish Shop**, 324 Upper Street, N1. But there are more strategically sited and cheaper fish and chip establishments for visitors, notably the **Rock & Sole** Place at 47 Endell Street, WC2, in Covent Garden and the **Fryers** Delight, 19 Theobald's Road, WC1.

Of the ethnic cuisines, the best value and most attractive to budget diners are



Ready to eat: Pret à Manger, Marble Arch

Chinese dim sum and Indian vegetarian. Dim sum meals are served from midday to 6pm at the **New World**, 1 Gerrard Place, W1, or **Chuen Cheng Ku**, 17 Wardour Street, W1, both in Chinatown, south of Shaftesbury Avenue. Trolleys circulate so you can choose a succession of snack dishes on sight without grappling with possibly unfamiliar names. **Diwana Bhai Puri House**, 121 Drummond Street, NW1, behind Euston Station, and **Mandarin**, 21 Hanway Place, W1, hidden in a back street behind the corner of Oxford Street and Tottenham Court Road, are classic establishments for low-priced Indian vegetarian buffets. Others cheap cuisines

worth considering are **Bengali** (centred on Brick Lane, Whitechapel, E1), **Turkish** (particularly Stoke Newington, N1, N16) and **Jewish** in Golders Green, NW11.

Next think of pubs, once as vilified for their food as British Rail but now frequently a good source for better than fuel food, and at highly competitive prices (although at weekends some of them may either be closed or not

serve food). Characterful pubs with good tucker and beer include: the **Fox** and **Anchor** in Charterhouse Street, Smithfield, EC1; the **Lamb Tavern** in Leadenhall Market and the **George & Vulture**, 3 Castle Street, both in the City, EC3; the **Walrus** and **Carpenter**, 45 Monument Street, EC3; the **City of York**, 22-23 High Holborn, WC1; the **Eagle**, 159 Farringdon Road, EC1; the **Lansdowne**, 90 Gloucester Avenue in Primrose Hill, NW1; the **Spice of Life**, 37-39 Romilly Street, WC2, and **French House**, 49 Dean Street, W1, both in Soho; the **Chandos**, 29 St Martin's Lane, WC2, near Trafalgar Square and the **National**

Gallery; the **Imperial Arms**, 577 King's Road in Fulham, SW6; the **Grapes**, 76 Narrow Street by the Thames in Limehouse, E14; the **Holly Bush**, 22 Holly Mount off Heath Street in Hampstead, NW3; the **White Horse**, Parsons Green, SW6; and the **White Cross Hotel**, Water Lane, Richmond, close to Richmond Bridge.

There is no shortage of places in London where an average spend can be kept under £15 a head, in many cases well under. And the pleasurable thing to write at the end of this summary is that these recommendations are not comprehensive.

There are plenty more bargains that visitors will discover themselves. The good news is that with such strong competition, the old tourist traps must know their days are numbered.

ROBIN YOUNG

CORRECTION: The telephone number for **Rural Retreats** (self-catering for Christmas, Weekend, Oct 26) should have been 01386 701177 and for **International Chapters** 0171-722 0122.

SPECIAL BREAKS

The line of coaches stretching along Park Lane and the Albert Embankment in London on recent Saturdays testifies to the start of the pre-Christmas shopping rush to the capital. They bring in thousands of shoppers for as little as £5 in some cases. But for those who wish to spend more time and money, a large number of packages exist.

Visits to London shows, from **Phantom of the Opera** to the new dance musical **Smokey Joe's Cafe**, are offered either as an essential part of some breaks or as extras. Coach tours of the city, discount vouchers for leading attractions including **Madame Tussaud's**, the London white card for cheap entry to galleries and museums, and half-price travel cards are among the bonuses included in many packages. Some are designed for shoppers, while others go for luxury from welcome champagne to a limousine to take visitors around the city.

Probably the widest range of offers is from the **London Travel Service**, which provides rail-inclusive packages from around Britain and flights from Scotland and the north of England. Prices for two nights' bed and breakfast at a modest hotel start from £64 a person and include return rail travel from the Home Counties and the edge of the commuting belt such as Oxford and Northampton.

For those travelling from further afield — Devon, Lancashire or South Yorkshire, for example — the price is £87, and for visitors from Glasgow and Edinburgh it is £109. The supplement for flying from the two Scottish cities with Air UK to either London City or Stansted is £44. Every traveller on these packages will receive a guide to London, detailed maps and a half-price travel card for a day.

Theatre tickets can be booked as extras with prices ranging from £39.95 for the best seats at **Phantom** to £33 for **Starlight Express** plus a three-course meal, to £15 for a reasonable seat at a less high-profile performance. "We make sure we have

the seats for the beds we sell, because more than a third of our customers buy theatre tickets," says Trevor Worth, London Travel Service manager.

Goldenrail offers several packages which include a night at a four-star hotel, a top-price ticket for a show and a free CD of the music. One current offer features **Riverdance** plus two nights' accommodation from £119, with rail travel extra.

Rainbow Holidays has a "mix and match" service allowing clients to combine any top West End show with accommodation at one of more than 70 hotels. Deals include £57.50 for a night at the **Mayflower Hotel** and a ticket for **Buddy**. Over Christmas and into the new year, the company offers two nights' accommodation, a dress circle seat at **Phantom** and discount vouchers for top attractions for £198 a person. Rainbow also has two shopping weekends in December including two nights' accommodation, a Sunday lunch cruise on the Thames and discount vouchers for £129 a person.

Among the extras from **Osprey Holidays**, which organises London breaks by air from Scotland, is the London white card which provides entry to 15 galleries and museums for £15. Two nights in London and return flights from Scottish airports start at £218 a person.

For those who want to make their visit even more memorable, **Select Theatre Breaks** offers a night at the **Berkeley**, **Claridge's** or the **Savoy**, dinner and the best seats at a top show for £192 a person. For a little more, guests can be greeted with champagne, chauffeured to the theatre and have a Butler serving champagne and canapés in the interval.

TONY DAWE

London Travel Service, 01992 456177. Goldenrail, 01904 638973. Rainbow Holidays, 01904 450400. Osprey Holidays, 0990 605605. Select Theatre Breaks, 0171-494 5318.



Show time: Phantom of the Opera is a popular choice

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In addition to its great natural beauty Northern Cyprus is steeped in history. Each period has left its mark, evident in the Greek and Roman sites, the monasteries, and the Byzantine churches. Perhaps best known of all, the Crusader Castles which perch high on mountain ledges.

Our week long visits to Northern Cyprus have been arranged during the Winter, when the weather is ideal for touring and exploring. The months of November and March offer particularly fine weather and day time temperatures are often in the low-seventies. The mid-winter months are cooler, but even in January it is surprisingly mild with temperatures often reaching the low and mid-sixties.

Such weather is glorious for visiting the ancient sites. Salamis, a one time capital, is especially worthwhile as is the old walled city of Famagusta, the 5th century BC palace of Yvoni, and the ruins of Soli, a Hellenistic and Roman city. Drive up into the mountains to see the fairy-tale Kantara Castle. It was mentioned at the time of Richard Coeur de Lion's short stay on the way to the Crusades in 1191.

Our base for the week long stay will be the Onar Village, which sits high on a hill overlooking Kyrenia. Here you have the choice of staying in a hotel room which offers a private balcony or in one of the cottages which are scattered around the gardens. The cottages are large and consist of a bedroom, sitting room/dining room, bathroom, kitchen area and large patio. They are ideal for parties of 3 or 4 who wish to be accommodated together, but are also available for two people sharing.

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BED AND BREAKFAST

WITH A night in a top London hotel costing as much as a week's holiday abroad, it is not surprising that London bed-and-breakfasts are in such demand, particularly those well situated for shopping, theatre and sightseeing trips. *Jill Cranshaw* writes.

Top-drawer B&B agency **Uptown Reservations** (0171-351 3445) has 56 private homes, all in central London, although "a few visitors choose to go to Holland Park or Notting Hill". The agency charges a flat rate of £55 for a single, £70 for a double room per night. All properties have private bathrooms and some have historical connections — Virginia Woolf was born in what is now a B&B near Hyde Park. A Queen Anne house in Chyne Row with a single, double and family room belonged to William de Morgan, potter and colleague of William Morris.

At **Home in London** (0181-748 1943) offers 70 private homes in central and west London, close to public transport. Most bedrooms have private bathrooms. Costs vary according to location — in Victoria, for example, a theatre owner's flat complete with four-poster, and where the owner will arrange a guided tour of his theatre, costs £62 a night.

Wolsey Lodge (01449 741297) has a handful of B&Bs on its books at locations ranging from Fulham to near the Thames at Staines, where an Edwardian launch is available for charter. Prices are from £35-£45 per room.

Bed and Breakfast GB (01491-578 803) has 60-70 houses and small hotels, some cost-

ing as little as £18.50 a night — although these have no private bathrooms and are likely to be 30 minutes or so by Tube from the centre of London.

At the top end of the market, a former Ambassador's residence near Sloane Square, now a large private house with eight bedrooms, costs £46 per person per night. Twenty-one rigorously inspected B&Bs and small hotels are listed in the **Which? Good Bed and Breakfast Guide** (£14.99 from bookshops or phone 0800 252 100). The average prices are £22 for a single, £44 for a double and £68-78 for a family room.

BUDGET B&B accommodation in London is not so easy to find, and standards and locations vary considerably. The London Tourist Board does publish a booklet entitled **London Accommodation for Budget Travellers**, but this, rather mysteriously, is only available outside London. B&B bookings can, however, be made at main Tourist Information Offices in the capital.

The Generator (0171-388 7666), a hostel near Russell Square, has rooms for two to eight people costing £20.50 each for two people, £16 each for eight sharing.

If you prefer to stay on campus, some of London University's colleges open their doors to visitors during Christmas — including **British Universities Accommodation Consortium** (BUAC) on 0115-950 4571 — with B&B costing from £16.50 a night.



Staying at this private house in Chiswick, close to the Tube, costs £25 per person per night

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International skiing: In part five of his resorts guide, Doug Sager heads for the wilds of western Canada

Downhill highs in cold grizzly country



CANADA seems to be on every skier's wish-list and in every tour operator's brochure. But with 58 operators rushing to jump on the bandwagon and cash in, and the Canadian Tourism Commission predicting that 35,000 British skiers will arrive this year, it is fair to ask whether Canada is really ready for a mass invasion.

To put it bluntly, for skiers habituated to the sunny Alps, Canada is cold comfort. There is a reason why it snows so much in Canada, and why Canadians wear contrivances such as face masks and boot covers which look like tea-cosies when they venture outdoors. And effusive reviews of Whistler — Canada's only world-class resort — seldom note that its maritime climate is a local byword for rain, temperature inversions of minus 20 degrees and wet, heavy snow which is fondly known as "Sierra cement".

But no matter how cold the Canadian winter, the welcome given to British visitors is genuinely warm. Ski schools and slope-grooming standards are focused unerringly on family values. And there are still plenty of deep-snow, low-priced resorts accessible by car from Calgary which tour operators have yet to discover.

Access by air is also more convenient than to most American resorts, especially now that tour operators are inaugurating charters to Calgary. But it is the Canadian dollar, slightly better value against sterling this year than last, which remains the main attraction.

AGAIN this year, Blackcomb and Whistler mountains have been voted number one in North America by the readers of American ski magazines. The two competing mountains share a joint ski pass but are only connected at one point down in Whistler village, one of the most characterful and convenient of car-free complexes on the continent.

Together, Blackcomb and Whistler provide the kind of off-piste glacier and couloir skiing which is to be found nowhere else in North America, the two "mile-high" mountains rating respectively number one and number two in terms of vertical drop for the continent.

Blackcomb is the state-of-the-art mountain, thanks to its enlightened management, its grooming is impeccable, the lifts high-speed and direct. New restaurants dish up food equal to that of the Alps, although drinking to Alpine levels of tolerance is actively discouraged, and smoking absolutely verboten. Whistler, which has replaced the chair lift involved in a fatal accident last winter with a modern gondola, has a more rough-and-ready feel to its twisting slopes.

Abundant wildlife is a feature of the Canadian skiing landscape. But asked why there are no elk wandering Whistler's streets they way they do all over Banff, one local resident replied nonchalantly, "The bears ate them".



Out on the slopes at Whistler. Besides a friendly and traffic-free village, the resort offers skiing to suit all ages and abilities on two mountains

the ground on opening day. Sunshine, which last year opened North America's largest new ski terrain, has made more new runs on the Goat's Eye mountain and installed what is claimed to be the world's fastest chair lift. And Lake Louise promises the best tree skiing in Canada in its new Parmigan Glades sector.

into some of Canada's smaller resorts, all of which are dominated by the family ethos. This means loads of locker space for children to change clothes, ample cafeterias with moderately priced meals, plus grooming and piste-polishing standards geared to families.

British skiers used to the Trois Vallées will find none of these smaller Canadian resorts big enough for a week's skiing. But driving from Silver Star to Apex, Big White and Sun Peaks allows time for the big mountain scenery to sink in. Silver Star, with a superb ski school, looks like a wild west movie set — wooden side-walks and verandahs. The skiing is mostly easy, but Putnam Creek is an isolated area of steep chutes where serious skiers can let rip.

Big White is about to go bigger with a \$45 million expansion, adding accommodation and high-speed lifts. Apex similarly suffers from a no-frills infrastructure at the moment, although thrills on the hills keep customers happy enough.

Sun Peaks is in the throes of major development and is the focus of much attention in Canada. New hotels and a sumptuous day lodge are already in place.

FACT FILE

- Crystal (0181-399 5144) goes to 11 resorts and has introduced a 14-day ski safari.
- Inghams (0181-780 4444) offers non-stop flights from London to Calgary, nine resorts including a three-resort ski safari and helicopter skiing.
- First Choice (0161-745 7000) also introduces charter flights this winter to both its resorts.
- Neilson (0113-239 4555) travels to five resorts. Thomson (0990-329 329) has four resorts. Airtours (01706 260 000) three.
- Ski the American Dream (0181-470 1181) adds eastern Canada to its five resorts.
- Ski Independence (0990-550 555) four resorts.
- Frontier Ski (0171-839 1627) offers excellent value and options such as whale watching.
- Ski Weekend (01367 241636) offers off-piste Whistler for ten-day breaks.
- Skiers World (01222 764477) specialises in groups.
- CMH helicopter skiing can be booked by Powder Skiing North America (0171-736 8191) or Frontier Ski.
- Mike Wiegels Helicopter Skiing can be booked with Ski Scott Dunn (0181-767 0202), Frontier Ski and Inghams.

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SET IN a national park where it is illegal to swat a fly, Banff offers views which put Colorado to shame. The town supports a lively cultural scene, coffee shops serving enormous "bear claw" pastries, and friendly bars.

Hotels in the Banff area, eminently affordable in the "low" winter season, are holiday attractions in themselves. The 850-room Banff Springs is complemented by Chateau Lake Louise, set along a lake shore opposite a hanging glacier in one of the world's great beauty spots.

Banff skiing is best sampled on the Tri-Area ski pass. This includes Mount Norquay, Sunshine Village further afield on the continental divide, and Lake Louise, Canada's single largest ski area. This year Fortress Mountain and Nakiska have been added to a new Banff Five-Area ski pass.

Norquay's new lodge opens this winter, last year's new lodge having burnt to

HELICOPTER and snowcat skiing are Canada's answer to Europe's off-piste. Whistler and Banff both have day helicopter skiing for beginners. Revelstoke is a wilderness town with limited lift-served skiing but hosting several snowcat and helicopter skiing operations, including the excellent-value Selkirk Tangiers Heliskiing.

Mike Wiegels's heli-ranch in Blue River encompasses the world's largest helicopter skiing concession and has to be recommended as the best, if only because of Wiegels's policy of always limiting helicopters to three groups, never allowing more than ten skiers in any one group, and always skiing with at least two guides. CMH features nine wilderness lodges and carries some 350 Britons each year.

THIS season for the first time, a number of British tour operators offer peeks

WORD WATCHING

Answers from Page 25

GENET

(b) A kind of civet-cat, a native of southern Europe, western Asia and Africa. The common species (*Genetta vulgaris* or *Viverra zibetha*) is found in the south of France. From the Old French *genete*. "The palmyra becomes the resort of the palm-cat and the glossy and graceful genet."

GHEE

(c) Butter made from buffalo's milk, clarified by boiling, so as to resemble oil in consistency. From the Hindi *ghī*, Sanskrit *ghrita*, from *ghr* to sprinkle. "He asked pardon of him who carried the dog, and bought it for a measure of rice and a pot of ghee."

GINGREAT

(a) To chirp or cackle as birds do. From the Latin *gingrire* to cackle like a goose.

GLEEK

(a) To trick or circumvent. To make a jest or gibe at a person. Of obscure origin, perhaps a diminutive of glee an entertainment. Shakespeare *Henry V*, v, i, 78: "I have seen you gleeking and galling at this gentleman twice or thrice."

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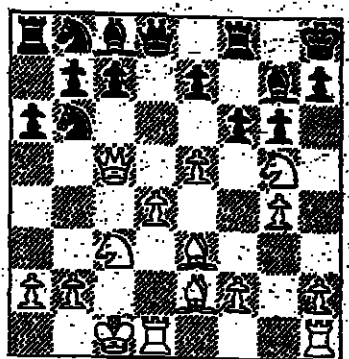
Club Med Start Living.

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OFFER SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY.

by Raymond Keene

ANATOLY Karpov's result in the elite tournament at Tilburg, which concluded just over a week ago, is among his more modest achievements (he ended with 50 per cent), but the FIDE world champion had the consolation of winning one of the most incisive games in the final round, against the young Hungarian Peter Leko. Leko is considered a particular expert in this variation, one widely espoused by Hungarian players, so it must have pleased Karpov to have demolished him with verve and grace.



White: Karpov, Black: Leko
Tilburg, October 1996
Grünfeld Defence

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6
3 Nc3 d5 4 N3 Bg7
5 Qb3

One of Karpov's favourites. By pressurising d5 he hopes to persuade Black to surrender the centre by taking White's pawn.

Although this move was invented by Alekhine in the 1930s, it has only recently gained respectability after adoption by Hungarian grandmasters. Popular alternatives are 7... Bg4 and 7... Na6, both of which have been played by Kasparov.

8... Nf4? Leko varies from two games in the Karpov-Kamsky FIDE world championship match played earlier this year in Elista, where Black did not fare particularly well with the immediate 8... b5.

9 Be3 Nf6 10 Qc5 Bb6
11 Ng5 Bf5 12 Be2 Kf8
13 g4 Bc8 14 0-0-0

The board is in flames, as is so often the case when the players castle on opposite wings. White's target is clearly the black king.

15 Ng4 f5 16 g5 Bxf5
17 h4 Nxd7 18 Qa3 Nf6
19 Ng5

Avoiding 19 Nxd5 Bxf4 forking two white pieces.

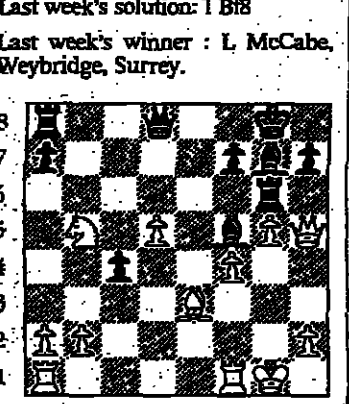
20... N7b5 21 h5 Nxa3
22 f3 Bf6 23 Ne4 Qd7
24... Qxg5 25 Rxd1 Rxd8 If 25... Bxf4 26 Nxd4 Qxh4 27 Rb6 leaves Black very badly placed.

26... Threatening N7f4, winning Black's queen. Black also has to contend with the threat of Bb5. Leko, therefore, takes drastic counter-measures, but he has overlooked a neat tactical trick: 26... Rxd4! 27 exd4 Bxf4.



With his pin against White's knight, Black appears to have confused the issue, but Karpov now deals the death blow.
28 Rxb6 Qxb6 29 Qe3. Black resigns. White threatens both to capture the black bishop on e4 and to win Black's queen with N7f4 and if 29... Rg8 30 Nf7 is checkmate.

Last week's solution: 1 Bf8
Last week's winner: I. McCabe, Weybridge, Surrey.



a b c d e f g h

PUNCHLINE

READERS are invited to write an amusing caption for the cartoon (right), from The Strand Magazine (reproduced with permission from Westminster Libraries, Sherlock Holmes Collection, Marylebone Library).



WHAT DOES HE SAY, MARGARET?



"You do the siren today, Stan, my throat's killing me"

The winning caption for last week's cartoon (above) was submitted by J. Burscough of Brigg, Humbershire

WORD-WATCHING

By Philip Howard

- GENET
a. Component of a living cell
b. A civet cat
c. A shrimping net
- GHEE
a. A cricket
b. Afghan polo
c. Buffalo butter
- GINGREAT
a. To chirp
b. A Far Eastern cocktail
c. A mantrap
- GLEEK
a. To deceive
b. An old-fashioned golf club
c. A muddy backwater

Answers on page 23

BRIDGE

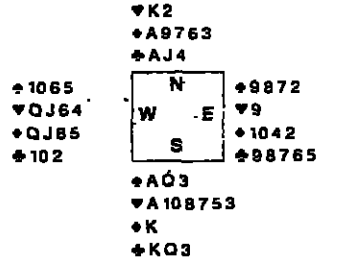
by Robert Sheehan

DO YOU KNOW this famous old chestnut? You have to play this combination to make five tricks:

K2
A108753

The correct play is to lead the 10 and run it if West plays low. It doesn't matter what you do if the suit breaks 3-2, but running the 10 gains when West has QJ64 and East the singleton 9. If West plays the 9, jack or queen on the 10, you put up the king; you then lead the 2 and cover East's card.

The unlikely combination actually occurred a few years ago in a match between England and Wales. The layout was something like this:



Contract: 6NT by South
Lead: six of spades

Patrick Jourdain, the declarer for Wales, is a keen student of the game, and he played the hearts in the approved fashion. I hope he shouted "Eureka" when the magic 9 fell under the 10. At the other table David Price and David Burn for England (you'd have thought they should play for Wales with those first names) bid to Six Hearts. After a

spade lead Burn played a heart to the king, and subsequently lost two trump tricks for one down. After the hand Price asked him what his hearts were: "A 10 to six", "A 10 what?" said Price, leaning forward. "A 10 8," replied Burn. "A 10 8 WHAT?" Price shouted. Burn nervously admitted to the seven, enabling Price to point out the *rara avis* Burn had missed.

But Burn, a resourceful player (now coach of the British Open team), came back with a good excuse. He said he was going to play East for QJ9x of hearts, and organise a trump coup. Say all follow small to the first round of hearts. On the second round East must put in the queen from the hypothesised QJ9x, else declarer plays the 10 and only loses one trump. Declarer wins and West shows out.

Now if East started with a favourable shape, e.g. 3-4-3-3, declarer can arrange to ruff two diamonds in hand. Then at trick eleven declarer crosses to dummy. In the two-card ending East has ♠J9 and South ♠108; with the lead coming through him, East only makes one trump trick. The round robin phase of the Olympiad ended last Monday. The British Open team was fifth in its group, failing by one place to advance to the quarter-finals. The British women were fourth in their group and so got to the quarter-finals, where they lost narrowly to Austria. A different opening lead on the last board would have secured them victory. The results of the finals will be published in the bridge column next Monday.

COMPUTER GAMES AND PASTIMES

by Tim Wapshott



Not for those in a hurry but Fly Fishing is swamped by its audio-visual beauty

A CYNIC might suggest that the only way to make computer fishing games feel remotely authentic is to play them standing in the bath. Admittedly, fishing rates as one of the most unlikely sports for the desktop since it is, by its very nature, such a soporific pastime.

Much of the appeal of a day up to your elbows in waters and freezing water is the serene setting, and the sublime solitude, even if you do have to get up at the crack of dawn. Excitement comes along once in a while but in the main it is a waiting game that just can't be rushed.

For fishing read bucketloads of sentiment—not to mention bucks for Yellow Pages, the phone book firm. It actually registered its best commercial creation—J.R. Hartley. In one of the most surreal literary events of modern times, the bogus author then somehow wrote the book of his dreams from the ads. Fly Fishing, which the public swallowed hook, line and sinker.

In time for this Christmas, Yellow Pages is dusting down the registered J.R. Hartley trademark for a second corny spin-off, a CD-Rom fishing title which is

also called Fly Fishing and comes packaged as another book. Actually this derivative title is quite good in an off-beat way. The fishing element admirably suggests the full flavour of a day at the lush riverbank using photo-realistic images overlaid with an inviting pastoral cacophony. To the rhythm of the flowing river come the traditional sounds of a British summer—in the distance you can hear ducks, sheep and cows. There are three rivers to fish: Ireland's salmon-rich Blackwater, the Spey in the Highlands of Scotland and the Test in Hampshire.

Swamped by such audio-visual beauty, you cast your line in the hope of a bite or two from brown and rainbow trout or salmon. You have to know where to cast your line in the first place, and for this you need to look out for tiny bubbles appearing on the water's surface. Casting is carried off with a well-timed mouse click, using a moving meter, but it is actually devilishly tricky to land any fish. These have artificial intelli-

gence, so they quickly learn your style and start to avoid your advances. The weather can be varied, so instead of sunshine you can splash about in heavy showers when some fish become easier to catch some of the time. Fly Fishing trickles along very slowly, and perhaps that's the point. This is not something for people in a hurry. The Windows

CD-Rom includes an illustrated library offering fishy lowdowns as well as tips from the angling expert Andy Murray.

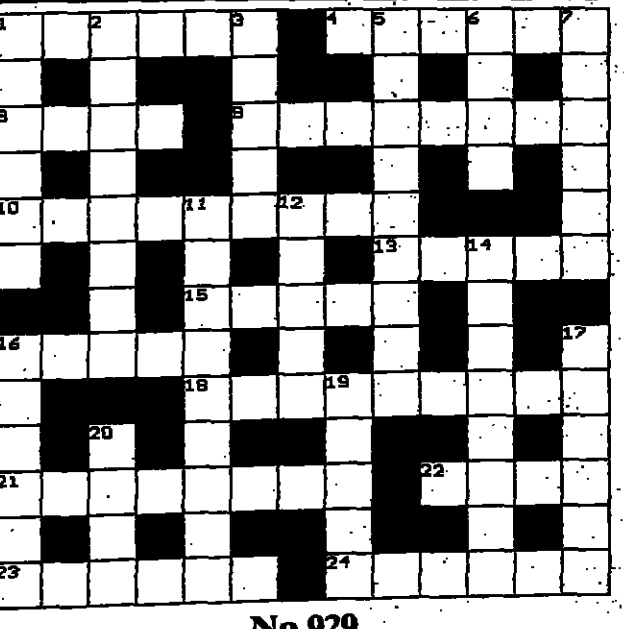
Younger electronic anglers might be better served with much easier fishing games, such as Bass Tournament '96 from American Softworks. The graphics aren't a patch on Fly Fishing but this in this modest title flow along faster. You start in a fishing shop with limited funds to stock up on tackle, rods, lines, floats and a decent boat. Here the catch is bass from North American lakes. The aim is to turn a profit through your competitive fishing skills in order to afford bigger and better tackle and boats which seek out better catches. For more serious-minded enthusiasts, Eagle Eye Interactive's Art of Coarse Fishing CD-Rom recounts plenty of fishing tales and tips in a reference work with 250 articles and 40 minutes of video footage. Bob Nudd, three times world champion, offers advice while TV commentator John Wilson focuses on tell-tale bubbles

and ripples. Even non-anglers might enjoy the quirky appeal of the advice offered here by the professionals. For example, a good stilton makes the ideal bait for pike and perch while other big fish will swim out of their way for Weetabix mixed with banana paste. For floating bait, try Go-Cat, dog food or Sugar Puffs. And once the children have scooped their Kinder eggs, snaffle the plastic shell inside—it makes an excellent float.

To close, news of how you can hook a prize catch of an interactive demo disc worth £5. So many of you entered our competition to win Scala Multimedia MM100 titles that, to avoid disappointment, the first 50 readers to write to the company can claim the demo. It contains all the features of the full package but has no save option. If you would like a copy, simply write, giving your name and address, to: Scala Times Demo Disc Offer, Scala Computer Television, Mill Studio, Crane Mead, Ware, Hertfordshire.

Ann, Ann! Come! Quick as you can! There's a fish that talks, in the frying pan. Walter de la Mare, Peacock Pie (1913).

TIMES CROSSWORD



No 929

- ACROSS
1 Female seclusion (6)
4 Angelic being, child (6)
8 Unfortunately (4)
9 Singer (8)
10 Masthead lookout post (5,4)
13 Watch-spring; large match (5)
15 Drop (vowel) (5)
16 Services clergyman (5)
18 Rich little dessert cake (5,4)
21 Church regulations (5,3)
22 Salvador—, surrealist (4)
23 Signify (6)
24 That is to say (6)
- DOWN
1 Fish; sounds like site (6)
2 Logically thought out (8)
3 Safe place (5)
5 With strong, sincere emotion (9)
6 Collapse (4)
7 Where—of Hastings took place (6)
11 Postpone decision overnight (5,2,2)
12 T S—, poet (5)
14 Mafioso destruction (8)
16 Calm (6)
17 Intelligent (6)
19 One from Des Moines (5)
20 In a while (4)

SOLUTION TO NO 928
ACROSS: 1 Blow one's top 8 Heels 9 Composite 10 Nook 11 Spoon-ful 13 Custom 14 Pauper 17 Unfroth 19 Toff 22 Halfpenny 23 Overt 24 Hydrophobia
DOWN: 1 Behan 2 Onerous 3 Queue 4 Escape 5 Temporal 6 Proof 7 Render 12 Cocooned 13 Caught 15 Proverb 16 Weirdo 18 Fifth 20 Farwa 21 Noah

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